



# City of New Bedford

## Office of City Council

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**Hugh C. Dunn, Esq.**

*Councillor Ward Three*

December 16, 2020

Marylou Sudders, MSW, ACSW  
Secretary, Health and Human Services  
One Ashburton Place  
Boston, MA 02108

Dear Secretary Sudders:

I am writing to respectfully request your Office's assistance in increasing levels of COVID-19 testing at the regional testing site, now operated by Project Beacon, in New Bedford. Since the transfer of this site from Alert Ambulance Service Inc. to Project Beacon, there has been considerable frustration with the new implementation of an online reservation requirement. Further, under Alert Ambulance Service Inc., the site was testing between 800-1000 residents a day. It has been stated that this site will begin with only 300-400 tests a day, an unacceptable drop in testing while the virus is spiking in our community.

Today, approximately 100 people lined up at a different Stop the Spread location in New Bedford, that does not have the reservation requirement. Meanwhile, as a neighbor to the Whales Tooth site, I have personally observed a drastic decline in its use. I respectfully request a public record of how many tests have been administered on a daily basis at this site under Project Beacon.

The Project Beacon model, as currently administered, poses obvious health equity issues. Primarily, the need to register online may pose a barrier to those who do not have access to the internet. Understanding there are complications of people potentially abusing the testing system, at a minimum we should have a multilingual call center for test scheduling – making it accessible for all. Also, the rollout of this change to our testing availability could have been communicated more broadly to our community.

As someone who tested positive for Covid-19 and utilized the Stop the Spread testing locations numerous times, I both applaud your Office for its past testing programs and respectfully request that you make Project Beacon testing more broadly accessible.

Sincerely,

Hugh C. Dunn, Esq.,  
Councillor Ward Three  
New Bedford, MA

HCD: rrr

cc: File