

Local News

Ottawa ACORN mobile clinic brings COVID tests to disabled, disadvantaged

Blair Crawford

Jul 11, 2020 • Last Updated 15 hours ago • 3 minute read



Theresa Corbett was one of 115 people tested at a mobile COVID-19 clinic Saturday arranged by Ottawa ACORN in Ogilvie North Park. ASHLEY FRASER / Postmedia



Jean-Marc Ladouceur was among those tested during the one-day COVID-19 pilot testing event. ASHLEY FRASER/Postmedia

Ladouceur, a veteran who applied for the federal emergency financial assistance this month, needs the test in order to see his mother, who is in a long-term care home.

The need for a negative COVID test to visit relatives in residential care is one of the reasons that lineups are growing at Ottawa's assessment sites. Waits can be as long as four hours at the main clinic at Brewer arena, which is operated by The Ottawa Hospital. Waits can be almost as long at the Moodie Drive assessment centre operated by the Queensway Carleton Hospital and at Montfort Hospital's Heron Road site.

All three sites are operating at maximum capacity, combining to test more than 1,200 people a day.



Theresa Corbett was tested during the one-day COVID-19 pilot testing event. ASHLEY FRASER/Postmedia

Saturday's mobile clinic was organized by Ottawa ACORN, an advocacy group for low and moderate income families. It approached Ottawa Public Health to help organize the clinic, which was supported by The Ottawa Hospital, CHEO, Ottawa Inner City Health and the Ottawa Paramedic Service. The Ottawa Mission supplied hot meals to staff and those waiting to be tested, and the company Honey Group brought its mobile SMRT testing booth, which offers contactless testing.

Ottawa ACORN distributed 1,500 flyers in the area in English, French, Somali and Arabic.

“We thought this would be a good area because it is low income and there are disabled people and seniors,” said Stephanie Graham, an ACORN volunteer who helped distribute free masks and hand sanitizer to visitors to the clinic.

Graham said she’s had difficulty getting to an assessment centre herself from her home in Vanier because of the poor bus connections, but she chose not to take advantage of Saturday’s mobile clinic.

“We did it for the people who live around here and they are the ones who should get the first opportunity,” she said.



People wait in line during the one-day COVID-19 pilot testing event. ASHLEY FRASER/Postmedia

“I think it was a success. I’m sure there are (other) areas we could go to — across Blair (Road), and there are areas in Orléans and Gloucester, and where I live in Vanier.

“I’m glad of the support we got from ACORN and that everyone stood up and pushed for it.”

ACORN had hoped to do 70 tests during the three-hour session, but had eclipsed that mark by 45 by the time testing wrapped up.

As demand for testing builds, The Ottawa Hospital is looking to divert some of its resources to mobile clinics like the Ottawa ACORN one. Saturday's clinic was a "learning opportunity" for the hospital, which co-ordinates its response to the pandemic with the Champlain Region COVID Response Committee.

"The Champlain region's mobile testing strategy includes testing in long-term care homes and in residential settings for isolated elderly. The strategy evolves based on where disease is likely to exist, where disease will have the hardest impact, and on community need," the hospital said in a statement.

"The Ottawa Hospital and its partners continue to look for opportunities to provide testing nearer to home for those who have barriers to accessing the COVID Assessment Centre or COVID Care Clinics. This pilot project is a learning opportunity for the clinical team and in support of ACORN's location selection."

bcrawford@postmedia.com

[Twitter.com/getBAC](https://twitter.com/getBAC)



Ottawa Citizen Headline News

Sign up to receive daily headline news from Ottawa Citizen, a division of Postmedia Network Inc.

Email Address

Sign Up

By clicking on the sign up button you consent to receive the above newsletter from Postmedia Network Inc. You may unsubscribe any time by clicking on the unsubscribe link at the bottom of our emails. Postmedia Network Inc. | 365 Bloor Street East, Toronto, Ontario, M4W 3L4 | 416-383-2300

TRENDING

Hobbled by a stroke four years ago that left him using a walker to get around, Jean-Marc Ladouceur says getting to one of Ottawa's three COVID-19 assessment centres is no easy task. He can't afford a taxi or an Uber and travelling by bus with the multiple transfers required is too difficult with his disability.

Ladouceur was one of 115 people swabbed for COVID-19 at a mobile testing clinic set up Saturday in a small park near the intersection of Ogilve and Cyrville roads. The mobile clinic — the first of its kind in Ottawa — brought medical staff and test kits right to the doorstep of some of the city's most disadvantaged residents.

Ottawa Altered: How The Haunted Walk is adapti...



“I could take a bus, but it's very hard for me to stand and wait for a bus,” Ladouceur said as he waited for his No. 70 ticket to be called by screeners. “But there's the financial side, too. Everyone is struggling financially and for me to take an Uber would be expensive, and I just don't have the money for that.”

Mental health issues are another barrier for some people, he said.

“A lot of people have anxiety and aren't able to get on a bus,” he said. “Can you imagine waiting three hours at Brewer if you have anxiety?”

TRENDING

THIS WEEK IN FLYERS COMMENTS

Postmedia is committed to maintaining a lively but civil forum for discussion and encourage all readers to share their views on our articles. Comments may take up to an hour for moderation before appearing on the site. We ask you to keep your comments relevant and respectful. We have enabled email notifications—you will now receive an email if you receive a reply to your comment, there is an update to a comment thread you follow or if a user you follow comments. Visit our [Community Guidelines](#) for more information and details on how to adjust your [email](#) settings.

NewsReopening Canada
OpinionSportsArtsLife
Business

Follow the
Ottawa
Citizen



Advertise With UsDigital Ad RegistrySite MapContactPrivacy - UpdatedTerms of UseCopyright

365 Bloor Street East, Toronto, Ontario, M4W 3L4

© 2020 Ottawa Citizen, a division of Postmedia Network Inc. All rights reserved. Unauthorized distribution, transmission or republication strictly prohibited.