

THOMAS TUCCI, JR.
Chairman

LUIS A. QUINTANA
Vice Chairman

ELIZABETH CALABRESE
JOHN J. COSGROVE
MILDRED C. CRUMP
JAMES P. DORAN
JOSEPH F. ISOLA
HECTOR C. LORA
BRENDAN MURPHY
Commissioners



GREGORY A. TRAMONTOZZI
Executive Director

MATTHEW F. MURRAY
Clerk

“Protecting Public Health and the Environment”

600 Wilson Avenue, Newark, New Jersey 07105
(973) 817-5700
(973) 817-5738- fax
www.pvsc.nj.gov

For Immediate Release:
March 4, 2022

Contact Information: Doug Scancarella
dscancarella@pvsc.com, 973-817-5735

PVSC Joins CDC’s National Wastewater Surveillance System To Track COVID In Sewage

Newark, NJ – The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (“CDC”) recently announced that it will be expanding its National Wastewater Surveillance System (“NWSS”), a centralized public health tool that monitors wastewater for SARS-COV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19. The CDC has been operating the NWSS since September 2020. The expansion of the NWSS includes the posting of surveillance data on the CDC’s online COVID-19 tracker.

“This will allow you to compare data across states directly,” says Dr. Amy Kirby, the CDC’s team lead for the NWSS. “Infected people can shed the coronavirus in their feces even if they don’t show symptoms. The viral RNA can be detected in wastewater when it is sampled from a treatment plant.”

PVSC will participate in the NWSS by collecting samples of untreated influent wastewater twice a week, storing them in kits provided by the CDC and then shipping them via Federal Express within hours.

PVSC has been at the forefront of wastewater epidemiology testing since the beginning of the pandemic. In March 2020, PVSC partnered with Biobot Analytics, Inc., to engage in such testing. At the time, Biobot was in the beginning stages of starting a nationwide pro bono program to conduct a wastewater epidemiology study, in collaboration with, researchers from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Harvard University, and Brigham and Women’s Hospital.

PVSC has also partnered with the Rutgers University Department of Civil & Environmental Engineering on an extensive study regarding the prevalence of the SARS-CoV-2 virus in wastewater, and with the Bergen County Utilities Authority to conduct wastewater epidemiology testing, in conjunction with a program through Columbia University.

"Shedding in feces starts soon after someone is infected with the coronavirus," said Executive Director Gregory Tramontozzi. "Through participation in the CDC's NWSS program, we will be able to expand our surveillance capacity and continue to serve as an early-warning system for our communities."