



NEWS RELEASE

# Premier Inc. Survey: Hospitals' COVID-19 Testing Capacity Must at Least Triple Before Elective Surgeries Can Fully Resume

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- Latest Premier survey indicates that shortages of reagents and testing swabs are the main barriers to more widespread testing.
- Premier announces the formation of the COVID-19 Testing Advisory Panel to create best practices for developing testing plans, rapid response strategies and recommended use cases for different testing technologies.

CHARLOTTE, N.C.--(BUSINESS WIRE)-- **Premier Inc.** (NASDAQ: PINC), a leading healthcare improvement company, today released new survey results finding that healthcare facilities need to expand their current COVID-19 testing capacity by at least 211 percent in order to even partially resume full services, including elective procedures and diagnostic services.

While survey data indicates that 80 percent of respondents would like to increase their ability to conduct on-site COVID-19 testing, the main factors limiting these efforts are shortages of chemical reagents needed to perform the test (cited by 41 percent of respondents) and shortages of viral swabs (cited by 40 percent).

According to survey data, 81 percent of respondents intend to screen all employees for symptoms of COVID-19, including temperature and other symptom checks before resuming non-emergency procedures. However, given the limitations on testing supplies, only 32 percent said they will be able to proactively administer COVID-19 tests to all front-line healthcare workers, and only 22 percent will be able to test all ancillary employees such as foodservice workers or janitors. Until supplies are more readily available, 44 percent said they would have to limit testing to employees that are symptomatic. Further, 59 percent of respondents said they would have to limit re-testing of



front-line workers to only those that show symptoms of having contracted COVID-19.

“A core component of any reopening strategy is broad testing capacity to minimize resurgence of COVID-19,” said Premier President Michael J. Alkire. “However, current restrictions on capacity and shortages of swabs and reagents force health systems to limit testing, prioritizing patients and front-line workers who are symptomatic. Even with these strict conservation protocols, capacity needs to at least triple before enough is available to support even a partial restoration of non-emergency services. This represents a major challenge to patient care, as an inability to offer elective procedures and diagnostics can mean a missed opportunity to detect preventable illnesses early or begin treatments that are necessary for health and wellness.”

For patients, 87 percent of respondents intend to proactively administer COVID-19 tests to any patient admitted for an elective procedure, but only 27 percent said they would be able to proactively test patients undergoing a diagnostic service. Most respondents (54 percent) will continue to bar any family members or other visitors from the facility in order to reduce the risk of spreading infection and conserve available testing.

“Without adequate supplies, health systems are having to make hard choices to be as judicious as possible with their COVID-19 testing capacity,” continued Alkire. “To reach an ideal state where testing is available for all healthcare workers, patients and caregivers, capacity will need to vastly expand. Premier is working proactively to identify additional sources of swabs and reagents to expand needed capacity. At Premier, our goal is to ensure that all our members have the right test, for the right person, at the right time.”

To assist members in their efforts to expand testing, Premier announced the formation of the COVID-19 Testing Advisory Panel. The Advisory Panel is made up of executives from Premier member health systems, large employers and other nationally recognized leaders who will assist in the creation of robust testing plans, assure testing is available for employers, provide recommendations for the best use of available testing technologies, align testing supplies and capacity with anticipated laboratory needs, create best practices and technical assistance to improving testing and surveillance programs, and ensure member access to accurate tests and equipment.

“Nearly 60 percent of our survey respondents said they need guidance and best practices to determine which tests they should offer, and to whom, in order to smartly prioritize usage until supply challenges are effectively addressed,” continued Alkire. “The COVID-19 Testing Advisory Panel is designed to provide that guidance so that health systems and employers can make dynamic allocations, alleviate risk and minimize the spread of infection.”

Today, 48 percent of respondents send COVID-19 diagnostic tests out to commercial laboratories for analysis and 49 percent conduct those tests on-site or at the point of care. Less than 3 percent of respondents reported leveraging at-home specimen collection. Twenty-two percent of serology (antibody) tests are sent out to commercial labs while 16 percent are conducted at an on-site central lab or at the point of care.

## Survey Methodology

Premier's survey was conducted from April 27-April 30, 2020, and sent to a representative portion of the Premier membership. Approximately 150 unique hospitals, integrated delivery networks and ambulatory surgery centers accounting for nearly 400,000 elective procedures per month responded. Not every respondent answered every question. Premier has not independently verified the data submitted in response to the survey.

## About Premier Inc.

Premier Inc. (NASDAQ: PINC) is a leading healthcare improvement company, uniting an alliance of more than 4,000 U.S. hospitals and health systems and approximately 175,000 other providers and organizations to transform healthcare. With integrated data and analytics, collaboratives, supply chain solutions, and consulting and other services, Premier enables better care and outcomes at a lower cost. Premier plays a critical role in the rapidly evolving healthcare industry, collaborating with members to co-develop long-term innovations that reinvent and improve the way care is delivered to patients nationwide. Headquartered in Charlotte, N.C., Premier is passionate about transforming American healthcare. Please visit Premier's news and investor sites on [www.premierinc.com](http://www.premierinc.com); as well as **Twitter**, **Facebook**, **LinkedIn**, **YouTube**, **Instagram** and **Premier's blog** for more information about the company.

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