



## **Summary of Discussion of Board of County Commissioners Special Meeting regarding United Biomedical (“UBI”) Antibody Testing**

On March 26, 2020 the Board of County Commissioners met in a special meeting to discuss possible participation in alternative COVID-19 blood testing initiative (“UBI antibody testing.”) UBI antibody testing indicates the presence of antibodies needed to fight COVID-19; the test does not necessarily indicate whether or not the patient has, or has had COVID-19 (this type of testing is referred to as antigen testing).

Tanner Kingery, Ouray County Public Health Director, indicated that a community member had connected with UBI to inquire about the possibility for doing a large scale testing initiative similar to what is currently being undertaken by San Miguel County. Kingery said the proposal was for 9,600 tests in order for the requisite test to be administered twice. The anticipated cost was approximately \$230,400. Kingery indicated that the community member may be willing to cover some of the costs, but that the amount was undetermined and the community member had several stipulations. The stipulations are as follows (*these stipulations have been copied verbatim from the community member*):

- The county 100% commits to testing everyone who wants to be tested, and will see it through to the end.
- The county will develop the plan, and commit resources or obtain commitment (from OCEMS, Fire, Mountain Medical, etc.) to get this testing done in as fast a manner as possible, and responsibly.
- The county will pick up any costs outside of the cost of the test kits
- The county will use the testing data to encourage isolation and quarantine the people that should be, according to the test results
- The county will consider lifting certain public health restrictions, based on the test results, when deemed medically prudent, as determined by the medical director and yourself
- The county will start a strong public outreach program to convince all citizens this is a good thing for them and for all of us
- Ideally the county finds a way to pay for the test kits, but if immediate cash is a concern we can upfront the whole cost, so we can move fast.

Dr. Andrew Yeowell, Ouray County EMS Medical Director and Montrose Memorial Hospital Emergency Department Doctor, gave a brief overview of how the UBI test was different than the antigen test, which indicated if a patient had COVID-19. Dr. Yeowell strongly recommended that the Board **not** pursue the UBI test for the following reasons:

- It endangers public health due to a general misunderstanding of the type of test, thereby increasing a false sense of safety if a patient tested positive for having the antibody needed for resisting the virus;
- the vast amount of resources (personnel, personal protective equipment) needed to administer the tests to the community would deplete already limited quantities of resources available; and,
- cost.

Dr. Yeowell recognized the value of the UBI tests from an epidemiological standpoint, and conceded that it may be helpful in determining antibody resistance in frontline personnel, like EMS and other healthcare workers, but that the overall impact would not be beneficial in Ouray County. Dr. Yeowell stated that encouraging residents to abide by the Stay At Home Order issued by Governor Polis on March 26, 2020 would be much more beneficial, in addition to adhering to good hygiene and social distancing recommendations.



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P.O. Box C • Ouray, Colorado 81427 • 970-325-7320 • FAX: 970-325-0452

Dr. Joel Gates, Ouray County Public Health Medical Officer and Mountain Medical Family Medicine Doctor, agreed with Dr. Yeowell, and noted that it was unclear whether or not those who had tested positive for COVID-19 could be infected again.

Dr. Yeowell and Dr. Gates agreed that UBI antibody testing would not be beneficial to the Ouray County community.

The Board of County Commissioners allowed public comment where questions regarding the UBI antibody testing and the availability of testing and test kits were discussed.

A member of the community inquired if the individual who was potentially willing to cover some of the costs for the UBI antibody testing would be willing to offer assistance in securing more antigen tests for Ouray County. Kingery previously indicated that Ouray County ordered tests that would indicate whether a person had COVID-19, but there was no guarantee that the County would receive the number ordered. Dr. Gates previously stated that Mountain Medical ordered twenty tests, but only received ten. The Board of County Commissioner directed Kingery to follow up with the community member, and coordinate with Dr. Yeowell for contacts with the same lab that Montrose Memorial Hospital was utilizing.

Based on the recommendations received from Dr. Yeowell and Dr. Gates, the Board of County Commissioners agreed to **not pursue UBI antibody testing in Ouray County.**