

How MCC Helped Long-Term Care and Underserved Populations

The Background

In May 2021, The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and US Health and Human Services (HHS), established Operation Expanded Testing (OpET), a nationwide surveillance and testing infrastructure to rapidly identify COVID-19 cases, reduce exposure, address outbreaks and control spread of the disease.

The Challenge

Access to testing was an essential component of the detection and mitigation strategy, used with other public health approaches, to effectively reduce the spread of COVID-19. Essential to testing access was the timely and accurate reporting (under 24 hours), and data capture and integration to further support local, state and federal pandemic preparedness and response.

A key focus was serving high-need areas and filling any testing access gaps for underserved populations, including communities with a high Social Vulnerability Index (SVI over .5) and high-risk populations (such as long-term care and nursing homes).

Long-term care and nursing home facilities were especially high-risk populations for disease susceptibility. Providing ongoing surveillance and testing was critical for people in that demographic.

“Our MCC partnership was an essential supplement to our state’s testing program. It allowed us to better respond to surges in testing demand, reduce cost of testing, and serve vulnerable at-risk populations.”

Charles Williams II, MPH
Chief of Testing, Illinois
Department of Public Health

THE IMPACT

498

registered LTC and nursing homes

40%

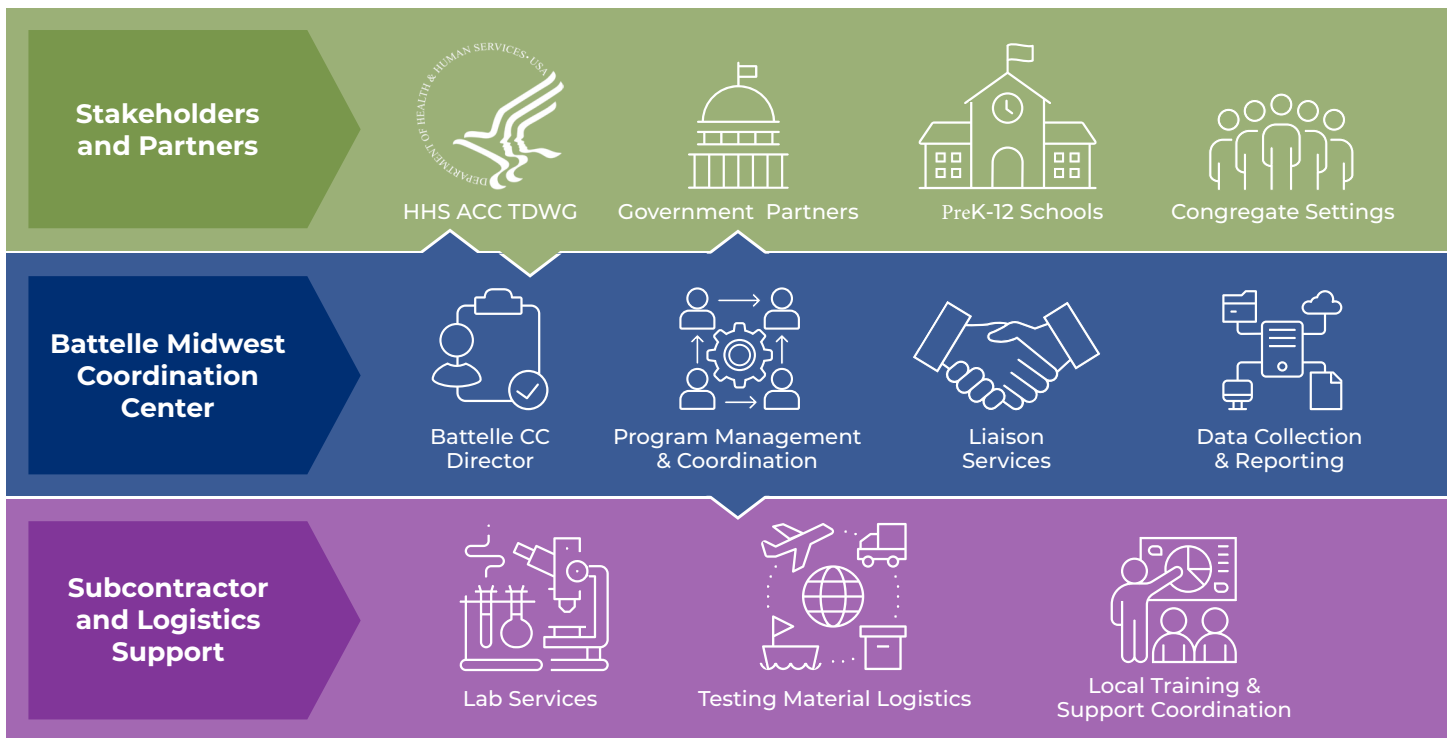
of the enrolled schools (453 of 1146 total schools enrolled) are high SVI

1354

testing sites for underserved populations

2M+

tests to-date and 3800 sites registered



Building to Benefit Public Health

The Midwest Coordination Center (MCC), operated by Battelle, built out new infrastructure within months to provide 16 states (Colorado, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, North Dakota, Ohio, South Dakota, Utah, Wisconsin, and Wyoming) with regional testing capacity and support systems.

This included:

- **Vital infrastructure development:** Healthcare communication protocols, testing lab coordination and management, staffing and training protocols, secure website portals, and secure data systems to manage operational and logistical aspects of large-scale testing and results reporting
- **Operations systems:** Outreach, training, and logistics to support site users' ongoing COVID-19 screening
- **Logistics support systems:** Flexibility to meet local, state, and federal needs for continuous testing support, expanded testing access, and additional testing in surge situations

Lessons learned

OpET will help inform the US Government's ongoing pandemic preparedness, response planning, and implementation such as improved public health reporting, early coordination, and establishing public health infrastructure.

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