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MEDIA RELEASE

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SMS DELIVERS FASTER COVID-19 RESULTS IN NSW

In a NSW first, patients can opt-in to receive their COVID-19 pathology results via text message.

NSW Health Pathology's secure automated SMS solution will see the average notification period for results halved, plus ease the pressure on busy hospital and laboratory staff.

Premier Gladys Berejiklian said more than 142,000 people had been tested and cleared, making it one of the highest testing rates in the world, and helping to stop the spread of the virus.

"We are able to test 5,000 patients per day, and while testing for COVID-19 only takes 6 to 8 hours from arrival of the sample at one of our specialist labs, the sheer volume has meant we haven't been able to get results to patients quickly," Ms Berejiklian said.

"Using our new statewide SMS notification solution, patients who register will receive an automated SMS test result within six hours of the completion of the laboratory test."

Minister for Customer Service Victor Dominello said the new service puts the patient first, reducing anxiety as quickly as possible and making life easier for them.

"Testing clinics are receiving thousands of calls from patients enquiring about their test results, which also puts increasing pressure on the health system," Mr Dominello said

"By opting in to receive a text, patients can be informed of a negative result faster."

Health Minister Brad Hazzard said both patients and medical professionals would benefit.

"This text indicating a negative result gives patients peace of mind and allows clinicians to dedicate more time to assisting patients who test positive," Mr Hazzard said.

A statewide roll-out of this service in the coming weeks follows a successful pilot in the Illawarra Shoalhaven Local Health Districts and Wollongong, Shellharbour and Shoalhaven Fever Clinics.

The SMS notification system will integrate with existing statewide security and other support infrastructure to ensure patient privacy and data integrity is maintained.

The service is only available to patients who are tested at a NSW public hospital or Fever Clinic. It is not available for patients tested by private pathology providers, however they can still access their result through their GP and in some instances My Health Record. Patients who test positive for the virus will still have their results reported immediately to their referring doctor and public health unit.

The initiative was developed in collaboration with Amazon Web Services, Deloitte Australia and Microsoft.

An enhanced Service NSW app is also being built that will provide customers with real-time updates on COVID-19 and more personalised health and non-health advice.

For the latest information on COVID-19 visit www.nsw.gov.au

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