



July 6, 2020

The Honorable Cory Gardner  
354 Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Michael Bennet  
261 Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Mitt Romney  
124 Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Kyrsten Sinema  
317 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senators Gardner, Bennet, Romney and Sinema:

The American Society for Microbiology (ASM), which represents 30,000 researchers and health care professionals in the United States and around the world, is pleased to support the Timely and Effective Systematic Testing (TEST) Act. We thank you for your work to build on the framework established by the Pandemic and All Hazards Preparedness Act (PAHPA) by improving biosurveillance activities and practices of the federal government, with the goal of strengthening our nation's capacity to respond to COVID-19 and future pandemics.

We also thank you for recognizing the uniquely important role of clinical microbiologists. These experts are critical to addressing public health concerns, on an everyday basis as well as during public health emergencies. This is true whether they work in public health laboratories or as part of the broader network of academic and hospital-based labs. To that end, we support the bill's provisions to improve coordination of public health data by identifying gaps and aligning payment incentives to providers to improve electronic case reporting capacity. Electronic case reporting will ensure efficient transmission of complete data gets to public health. It will also decrease the burden on providers and laboratories to search for missing information and patient data when submitting results to state and local public health departments.

ASM also supports improved population health strategies to better understand and address health disparities through more comprehensive collection, disaggregation and reporting of demographic data. COVID-19 has both exacerbated the disparities within our health care system, and brought to light the gaps in our public health data and surveillance systems, including the need for ongoing and sustained annual investments in public health data infrastructure. TEST Act provisions that implement and incentivize the use of electronic case reporting can help ensure the collection of accurate demographics data and thus improve our nation's biosurveillance capacity.

If ASM can be of further assistance, please contact Allen Segal, ASM Director of Policy and Advocacy at [asegal@asmusa.org](mailto:asegal@asmusa.org). We look forward to continuing to work with you on policy solutions to help our nation better respond to future public health emergencies.

Sincerely,

Stacey Schultz-Cherry, Ph.D.  
Chair, Public and Scientific Affairs Committee  
American Society for Microbiology

Melissa B. Miller, Ph.D.  
Chair, Clinical and Public Health Microbiology Committee  
American Society for Microbiology