



## New Poll Illustrates the Need to Continue Coverage for At-Home COVID-19 Tests Beyond the PHE

*A majority of Americans over age 65 rely on at-home COVID-19 tests, yet most are unaware that Medicare coverage is ending*

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**WASHINGTON D.C.** – An alarming 7 out of 10 Americans over the age of 65 expect to stop testing at home for COVID-19 if Medicare no longer covers at-home tests. The Testing at Home Coalition (TAHC) released a new poll today finding that 72% of U.S. adults relied on at-home tests over the past two years. However, only 24% of Americans over the age of 65 are aware that Medicare intends to stop covering these tests after the public health emergency (PHE) ends on May 11.

“The COVID-19 pandemic has changed how and where we get tested,” said Amy Kelbick, a lobbyist representing the Testing at Home Coalition. “Prior to the development of self-administered tests, people waited in long lines at mass testing centers or were tested by their physician or at an urgent care center or other clinic. But even then, Americans often waited three to seven days to receive their test results,” Kelbick went on to say.

When companies advanced technology to provide reliable tests that individuals could self-administer, people could more easily and more quickly diagnose COVID-19, and could seek treatment and isolate faster. Over-the-counter (OTC) tests changed the course of the pandemic and helped mitigate the spread of COVID-19.

The federal government began making self-administered tests available to the general public through COVID.gov. The US Department of Health and Human Services began requiring commercial insurers to cover self-administered COVID-19 tests in December 2021. Medicare has covered self-administered COVID-19 tests through a demonstration program since April 2022. CMS’s statutory demonstration authority allows the agency to, among other things, develop and implement novel experiments, such as coverage for self-administered tests. Further, when CMS ends this demonstration, the Medicare program will provide no alternative coverage for over-the-counter self-administered COVID-19 tests. This authority is unrelated to the PHE, but CMS has indicated that it intends to end the demonstration program when the PHE concludes on May 11, but the need for affordable self-administered COVID-19 tests will not end there.



The poll released today underscores how many Americans rely on OTC at-home COVID-19 tests to help keep themselves and their families healthy, how little understanding there is that insurance coverage is ending, and the potential consequences for the general public if access to affordable tests decreases. Some key findings include:

- Nearly three fourths (72%) of Americans 65 and older agree frequent diagnostic testing is necessary to keep the population healthy. The same number of those over 65 (72%) have relied on at-home tests over the past two years.
- The Medicare population (and the general public) are unaware that this coverage is ending. Half (50%) of Americans 65 and older believe that at home tests will continue to be covered by insurance after the PHE ends. Only 24% are aware that coverage for at-home tests will end on May 11.
- Without access to at home tests covered by insurance, nearly 2 in 3 Americans (64%) are likely to stop testing at home, with 25% saying they definitely would stop testing at home.
- Similarly, if at-home tests are no longer covered by insurance, 7 in 10 (70%) Americans ages 65 and older would be likely to stop testing at home.

This survey conducted by Wakefield Research and this effort from TAHC are both supported by Abbott. Abbott, along with BD, CVS Health, Ellume, National Association of Chain Drug Stores and SAFE are members of TAHC. The survey included 1,000 nationally representative U.S. adults ages 18+, between March 8th and March 10th, 2023, using an email invitation and an online survey. The full poll can be found [here](#).

