

# Chambliss Team Provides Counsel for Hamilton County's Unprecedented Coronavirus Testing Lab

In a team effort with Hamilton County's County Attorney, Chambliss helped find legal solutions that permitted the establishment of the unprecedented Hamilton County coronavirus testing lab. On March 25, 2020, the Chattanooga reported that Baylor School is leasing one of its labs to the County for coronavirus testing, with an expected four-hour turnaround time. They plan to initially conduct about 65 tests per day and hope to later reach 300 tests per day with the help of new equipment that's on the way. According to the article "[Baylor School Science Researchers Step Up To Provide 4-Hour Coronavirus Testing; Coppinger Says Lab Can Eventually Do Up To 300 Per Day](#)," the new County testing lab was made possible by the initiative of two Baylor researchers, Dr. Elizabeth Forrester and Dr. Dawn Richards, who demonstrated the lab's ability to accurately complete coronavirus testing.

The County Health Department will oversee and lease the lab at Baylor. Swabs initially are being collected from local hospitals and will be delivered to the lab for testing. The article reports that people eligible for these tests would be current hospital patients, the hospital staff, and first responders. Mayor Jim Coppinger said this would greatly speed up testing and "[allows] medical providers to focus on treatment and the health department to much better detect trends in the spread of the virus." He believes it will also have positive impacts on the amount of PPE use.

On Friday, April 3, the new County lab will begin testing samples from patients referred by local physicians and clinics. The samples will be collected at a drive-in collection site in Brainerd.

Our multidisciplinary team included attorneys from our municipal and government, health care, business, and real estate groups. Starting the evening of March 20, the team worked with County officials through the weekend to complete necessary tasks so the lab could be approved by the County Commission the following Wednesday morning. Rick Hitchcock served as lead attorney, working alongside Mayor Coppinger and Hamilton County Attorney Rheubin Taylor. Our attorneys Mark Cunningham, Doug Griswold, Andy Leffler, Mike St. Charles, Michael Stewart, and Kirby Yost worked closely with Rick, and all played integral roles in advising on a variety of matters from health care licensing statutes to leasing.

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- Read the Chattanooga article, "[Baylor School Science Researchers Step Up To Provide 4-Hour Coronavirus Testing; Coppinger Says Lab Can Eventually Do Up To 300 Per Day](#)."

- Read the Chattanooga Times Free Press article, [“Baylor School COVID-19 testing makes national news.”](#)
- Read the MSNBC article, [“Tennessee high school instructors turn school lab into COVID-19 testing site.”](#)
- Read The Wall Street Journal article, [“Shortage of Test Components Forces Labs to Beg, Borrow and Improve.”](#)

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