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## Lamont Announces Agreement With Disability Rights Groups on Distribution of COVID-19 Rapid Tests and N95 Masks

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Governor Ned Lamont today announced that his administration, working in cooperation with the Office of Attorney General William Tong, has reached an agreement with Disability Rights Connecticut and Connecticut Legal Rights Project regarding the state's ongoing distribution of COVID-19 rapid antigen tests and N95 masks.

Under the agreement, the Connecticut Department of Public Health is issuing revised guidance to towns and cities on the distribution of tests and masks. This updated guidance includes instructions on the prioritization of vulnerable populations, including those who live in congregate housing and those who have physical, mental, or intellectual or other developmental disabilities.

In addition, the administration will be providing 20,000 N95 masks (without metal in them) to the Connecticut Department of Correction for the immediate use of incarcerated individuals.

Disability Rights Connecticut and Connecticut Legal Rights Project have agreed to withdraw complaints they recently filed on this topic with the Office of Civil Rights and the United States Department of Justice.

"We know that COVID-19 is impacting certain, vulnerable populations the most, and that is why we need to do everything in our ability to ensure that those who have physical, mental, or developmental disabilities or live in congregate settings have access to the tools they need to protect themselves from this virus," **Governor Lamont said.** "I appreciate Disability Rights Connecticut and Connecticut Legal Rights Project for working with my administration on this effort."

"I want to thank our Health section chief Dan Shapiro for his excellent work in crafting this agreement, which will provide important access to masks and testing supplies for incarcerated individuals and individuals with disabilities," **Attorney General Tong said.** "I thank Governor Lamont and his team for their dogged efforts to bring these masks and tests into Connecticut to help keep us safe and fight this pandemic."

"As an organization serving individuals with disabilities throughout the state, we are pleased that the governor acted quickly in response to our complaints to get effective relief to the people we represent during this very difficult period in the pandemic," **Deborah Dorfman, executive director of Disability Rights Connecticut, said.** "This will help protect those who are most at risk, benefitting everyone."

"We are very appreciative that the state worked collaboratively with us to ensure that our clients in DMHAS facilities were able to get N95 masks, and to increase access to self-test kits for Connecticut residents with disabilities in all 169 cities and towns," **Kathy Flaherty, executive director of Connecticut Legal Rights Project, said.**

**\*\*Download:** Revised guidance from the Connecticut Department of Public Health to towns and cities on the distribution of tests and masks

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