

Amerigroup Community Care partners with Bikur Cholim to conduct COVID-19 antibody testing

Amerigroup, a leading Medicaid health plan in the Lakewood community, is partnering with the Lakewood Bikur Cholim to conduct antibody testing for those with COVID-19. Following the aggressive outbreak of COVID-19 in Lakewood, Amerigroup has supported the Bikur Cholim in the testing of more than 4,000 people for the virus and the collection of antibodies from those who tested positive.

“At Amerigroup, we are actively looking for new and innovative ways to support our local communities through this ongoing crisis,” said Teresa Hursey, Amerigroup Community Care Plan President. “We support over 25,000 members in the Lakewood community alone, so when we had the opportunity to partner with Bikur Cholim and fund efforts to test members of the community, we were happy to lend our support.”

With nearly 150,000 people diagnosed with COVID-19 in New Jersey, the pandemic hit the Lakewood community particularly hard.

“Bikur Cholim is dedicated to supporting the physical and spiritual needs of the Lakewood community,” said Rabbi Yehuda Kasziner, Director of Bikur Cholim of Lakewood. “When we saw first-hand the impact that COVID-19 was having on our community, we immediately looked for opportunities to help. With support from Amerigroup, we’ve been able to conduct testing and blood donation events that will have an immensely positive impact on our community and those we help.”

With financial support from Amerigroup, Bikur Cholim and Ocean County Internal Medicine Associates have hosted two events to test members of the Lakewood community for COVID-19. Those that tested positive were then given the opportunity to donate blood plasma that was sent to the Mayo Clinic and National Institute of Health for use in research.

“These plasma donations are an incredibly important asset to support much needed ongoing study of this virus,” said Dr. Allen Lempel, Ocean County Internal Medicine Associates. “As someone who has been on the frontlines treating residents of the community diagnosed with this aggressive virus, I can tell you there is still a lot that we do not understand about the impacts COVID can have and how the disease presents itself. By getting these plasma donations, we can hopefully better understand the disease and how to best treat it.”