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By:  Price H.R. No. 1393

R E S O L U T I O N

WHEREAS, During the early months of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Texas A&M Veterinary Medical Diagnostic Laboratory, the Amarillo Pathology Group, LLP, and APG's Physicians Preferred Laboratory, Ltd., came together to address the urgent community need for accurate and timely COVID-19 testing; and

WHEREAS, The demand for diagnostic testing was especially acute in March 2020 and the months that followed, as communities worked to track and assess the spread of the novel coronavirus; at that time, few public health laboratories were equipped to process the number of tests that were being requested, which led to the formation of a unique partnership between the Texas A&M Veterinary Medical Diagnostic Laboratory (TVMDL) and St. Joseph Health; TVMDL, which routinely tests herds and flocks of animals for a variety of diseases, lent its high-throughput equipment and laboratory space to St. Joseph Health staff, allowing them to begin performing a higher volume of PCR tests at its College Station laboratory in late April 2020; and

WHEREAS, Knowing that the need for testing was also critical in the Texas Panhandle, TVMDL went on to partner with the Amarillo Pathology Group's Physicians Preferred Laboratory (APG-PPL) to provide this same service at its Amarillo laboratory; through this partnership, APG-PPL was able to perform up to 600 COVID-19 tests each day and to deliver results to patients from 24-48 hours after specimens were collected; the laboratory proved to be a crucial asset to the region at this challenging time, and by fulfilling the need for testing during periods of high community spread, it helped local governments and businesses to make informed policy decisions; in February 2021, TVMDL and APG-PPL were recognized with Texas A&M AgriLife's Partnership Award; and

WHEREAS, A number of individuals were instrumental in establishing the initial partnership between TVMDL and APG-PPL, including TVMDL's director Dr. Bruce Akey and associate agency director Dr. Amy Swinford and APG-PPL's medical director Dr. Robert Todd II; also vital to this undertaking were APG-PPL administrators who helped secure federal approval for the clinic, Charlyn Snow and Heidi Dorman, as well as the Clinical Laboratory Improvements Amendment (CLIA) medical director, Dr. Andrew Hoot; and

WHEREAS, Other TVMDL professionals, Dr. Kiril Dimitrov, Dr. Pam Ferro, Dr. Megan Schroeder, and Dr. Owais Khan, handled such responsibilities as ensuring the accuracy of test results and securing testing supplies; TVMDL employees Jonatan Sanchez-Gama and Nicholas Monday trained and assisted APG-PPL staff on the use of the equipment, while APG-PPL employees Cliff George, Chris Kelly, Katera Padilla, and Ashley Tarrant were tasked with delivering human samples to the lab and performing tests; finally, a great deal of appreciation is owed to Texas A&M AgriLife vice chancellors Dr. Patrick J. Stover and Joe Cox and to Sandra Talton, legislative director in the office of State Representative Four Price, for their tremendous contributions; and

WHEREAS, The success of this collaboration is a credit to the expertise, ingenuity, and shared commitment to service demonstrated by all those involved in the partnership, and they are indeed deserving of heartfelt praise for their tireless efforts; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives of the 87th Texas Legislature hereby commend the Texas A&M Veterinary Medical Diagnostic Laboratory, the Amarillo Pathology Group, LLP, and APG's Physicians Preferred Laboratory, Ltd., for their work to ensure timely, accurate COVID-19 testing to the Texas Panhandle at the height of the pandemic and extend to their personnel sincere best wishes for the future; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That official copies of this resolution be prepared for the organizations as an expression of high regard by the Texas House of Representatives.