



CASE STUDY:

TELESCOPE HEALTH:

Launching a COVID-19 Testing Site in Record Time



In the early days of the COVID-19 outbreak, medical professionals knew that mobilizing testing capabilities would be crucial to controlling spread of the disease. With so little known about the virus and vectors for infection at that time, ensuring that testing happened safely was paramount. Initially, it was also important to try and limit testing to people who showed symptoms of infection, because personal protective equipment and testing resources were in short supply.

Jacksonville-based start-up [Telescope Health](#), a telemedicine provider and subsidiary of Emergency Resources Group, believed it had the answer. The company devised a solution by creating a system where residents experiencing symptoms of COVID-19, such as cough, fever or loss of sense of smell or taste, would first be assessed by a medical professional via a virtual visit to maintain a socially-distant environment. After this screening, and if symptoms warranted, the patient would be scheduled for a viral test to verify an active COVID-19 infection. This methodology was designed to control the number of patients at the testing location for the safety of those on-site and ensure the conservation of testing resources.

As Telescope Health noticed the increasing case rates across Asia and Europe, its leadership collaborated with the City of Jacksonville to pilot this testing program. The catch? Everything had to be done in less than one week. There was also significant financial risk for Telescope Health to pursue such a novel project without any guarantee it would launch successfully. Ultimately, the testing program would be supported by the City of Jacksonville and Telescope Health was able to provide crucial care services for Duval County residents.

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Telescope Health *(continued)*

Many moving parts
coordinated under



**EXTREME TIME
PRESSURE**

Emergency Resources Group is a longtime client of Smith Hulsey & Busey, and our firm's [Healthcare Team](#) helped it organize Telescope Health, its telemedicine subsidiary, in 2019. Knowing our firm's capabilities, Telescope Health turned to Smith Hulsey & Busey again as it confronted the daunting task of launching its COVID-19 testing site at the Prime Osborn Convention Center — which would be the first established in Northeast Florida.

A lot had to be done quickly to meet the city's tight six-day timeframe. For a start, there was a contract to negotiate with city leaders. Both Telescope Health and Smith Hulsey & Busey were also working in uncharted and evolving territory. For example, telemedicine was not initially covered by many insurance plans. Although that changed with the CARES Act, the relief legislation also added unexpected regulatory complexities of its own that had to be addressed. In addition, the firm correctly advised Telescope Health to scale up its staffing in order to meet expected patient loads during the health pandemic. Smith Hulsey & Busey also identified and worked to mitigate any potential liability for Telescope Health.



Long hours lead to a **SUCCESSFUL LAUNCH** benefiting the Jacksonville community

For nearly a week, the firm's healthcare attorneys and the Telescope Health team worked around the clock to launch the Prime Osborn Convention Center COVID-19 testing project successfully and on time. Our lawyers leveraged the experience gained in representing a variety of healthcare organizations to get it done efficiently and within the City of Jacksonville's required timeframe.

Just six days after bringing the idea to city leaders, Telescope Health conducted its first COVID-19 test at the Prime Osborn Convention Center. Thanks to Telescope Health and its partnership with Baptist Health, Northeast Florida residents had a testing site more than two weeks before the federal government and FEMA set up their own. That undoubtedly saved lives and helped control the spread of COVID-19 in Northeast Florida.



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