AECOM partners with Bergen County Utilities Authority and Columbia University on COVID-19 wastewater testing

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Monitoring COVID-19 ribonucleic acid in wastewater can provide early indication of increases in infection rates and the effectiveness of vaccine deployment in specific areas

LOS ANGELES--(BUSINESS WIRE)--Dec. 11, 2020-- AECOM (NYSE:ACM), the world's premier infrastructure consulting firm, today announced that it is partnering with Bergen County Utilities Authority (BCUA) and Columbia University to monitor COVID-19 ribonucleic acid (RNA) in wastewater in the BCUA sewer shed. Wastewater testing can be a leading indication of infection rates when trends of COVID-19 RNA are monitored over time.

"We're honored to partner with Bergen County Utilities Authority and Columbia University to leverage this innovative approach to tackling the coronavirus pandemic," said Lara Poloni, AECOM's president. "Our wastewater experts are working alongside our partners to establish sampling regiments, analyze test results, and present data that can inform public health decisions and help our communities."

Since the project's first phase commenced last spring, the team has collected, tested, and analyzed more than 650 samples, with results indicating that wastewater monitoring statistically provides a seven- to ten-day leading indicator of reported COVID-19 cases.

"Wastewater testing provides objective evidence that does not rely on individuals getting tested, giving us an anonymous overall picture of community health," said Julien Neals, Bergen County Administrator. "By continuing to partner with AECOM and Columbia University on this program's expansion, we will be able to conduct a more comprehensive, systematic study that gives us the best available data to help determine emerging hotspots, inform public policy, and assist with the creation of infrastructure to evaluate vaccine effectiveness, once it is available to the public."

Testing for COVID-19 RNA, which can be secreted by infected individuals prior to the display of symptoms, in wastewater may deliver valuable, early information around trends in infection rates and provide advantages in tracking hot spots and developing proactive mitigation strategies. The resulting anonymous data should equip public health and emergency management officials with a continuous method of community monitoring to inform decisions around social distancing protocols, shelter-in-place orders, targeted testing, reopening strategies, and vaccine deployment.

"Through our work with BCUA and Columbia University, we have seen impressive results demonstrating that wastewater testing provides an early signal of infection rates," said Paul Storella, senior vice president with AECOM's water business. "This critical program may assist government officials, first responders, and communities proactively manage surges in COVID-19 cases up to two weeks ahead of spikes."

For the pilot program, the project team collected samples at the Little Ferry Water Pollution Control Facility six days per week at six different points within the plant and at various points within the sewer collection system. Molecular testing – specifically, RT-qPCR testing – was then completed to determine the COVID-19 RNA concentrations and statistical analysis was performed to develop time series trends that correlated to actual reported cases.

AECOM, BCUA, and Columbia University will continue this work as the program is expanded.

About AECOM
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All statements in this communication other than statements of historical fact are "forward-looking statements" for purposes of federal and state securities laws, including any statements of the plans, strategies and objectives for future operations, profitability, strategic value creation, coronavirus impacts, risk profile and investment strategies, and any statements regarding future economic conditions or performance, and the expected financial and operational results of AECOM. Although we believe that the expectations reflected in our forward-looking statements are reasonable, actual results could differ materially from those projected or assumed in any of our forward-looking statements. Important factors that could cause our actual results, performance and achievements, or industry results to differ materially from estimates or projections contained in our forward-looking statements include, but are not limited to, the following: our business is cyclical and vulnerable to economic downturns and client spending reductions; impacts caused by the coronavirus and the related economic instability and market volatility, including the reaction of governments to the coronavirus, including any prolonged period of travel, commercial or other similar restrictions, the delay in commencement, or temporary or permanent halting of construction, infrastructure or other projects, requirements that we remove our employees or personnel from the field for their protection, and delays or reductions in planned initiatives by our governmental or commercial clients or potential clients; losses under fixed-price contracts; limited control over

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