

# FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE



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## **Gov. Wolf Awards Aptagen \$320,000 Contract for COVID-19 Research**

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September, 2020 (Jacobus, PA) – On behalf of Governor Tom Wolf, the Department of Community & Economic Development (DCED) awarded a \$320,000 contract to Aptagen, LLC to assist in research based within the spectrum of public safety against SARS-CoV-2 (COVID-19). This research is aimed at diagnostic evaluation and therapeutics towards the treatment of COVID-19.

COVID-19 is a respiratory viral infection caused by SARS-CoV-2 that is easily transmitted from one carrier to another through air droplets. The disease may manifest in a range of symptoms, from none (asymptomatic) to severe complications which may lead to death. The virus initially replicates using healthy cells as hosts and irritates and inflames the respiratory system, beginning with the trachea. Much like other viral infections, it targets the respiratory system causing constriction and clogging of the blood vessels in the lungs. To date there have been over 23.4M cases of COVID-19 and over 809,000 deaths, with over 5M cases and almost 200,000 deaths in the United States of America. This accounts for nearly 1 in every 4 global deaths.

A simple test that can provide immediate results is critical to informing people of the need to self-quarantine. Quickly and accurately identifying carriers infected with SARS-CoV-2 is key to mitigating the spread of the virus. The aptamers (biorecognition molecules) making up the paper-strip test could also prove to be a novel therapeutic in the fight against COVID-19.

President & CEO, G. Thomas Caltagirone, Ph.D. said, “We are a local biotechnology company within the Commonwealth researching ways to combat this pandemic. We are providing in-kind matching funds and are pleased with the Commonwealth’s funding response to this crisis.”

Aptagen, LLC is a global leader in aptamer development with more than 25 years of experience generating high-affinity and specifically binding ‘synthetic antibodies’ called aptamers against small molecules, proteins, cells, and tissues. The company produces state-of-the-art target-recognition elements for diagnostics, therapeutics, and bio-industrial applications. Learn more at [www.aptagen.com](http://www.aptagen.com)

**REQUIRED TEXT:**

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