Free COVID-19 Testing Act
Senator Tina Smith (D-Minn.)

On January 9, 2020, the World Health Organization (WHO) reported that a novel coronavirus was identified and associated with an outbreak of pneumonia in Wuhan City, Hubei Province, China. Since then, suspected cases rose drastically and the number of confirmed cases has now passed that of previous coronavirus outbreaks, including Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) and the Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS). It has also spread to countries across the world, and the number of cases has risen exponentially in the United States. On March 11, the WHO declared the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak a pandemic.

A global pandemic requires a serious response that is informed by the advice of public health experts and the best scientific evidence available. As the rapidly-spreading coronavirus continues to infect people across the United States, it is more important than ever to make sure that Americans cooperate to contain this outbreak. When seeking diagnostic screening and treatment, cost must not be a barrier.

The **Free COVID-19 Testing Act** would ensure that no person—with or without insurance—incurs cost-sharing when receiving a test to confirm a COVID-19 infection. Specifically, this bill waives cost-sharing for COVID-19 diagnostic testing and testing-related services—such as the cost of a visit.

For the uninsured, the Free COVID-19 Testing Act would cover the cost of lab fees, and it would create a new incentive for states to cover COVID-19 diagnostic testing and related health services through their Medicaid programs.

This bill would also extend protections for individuals enrolled in public health insurance plans, like Medicare, Medicare Advantage, Medicaid, the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP), TRICARE, and the VA. It would further apply to federal civilians, American Indians, and Alaska Natives.

Finally, this bill would ensure private insurers cover the cost of COVID-19 diagnostic tests and related services. They would also be prohibited from imposing limits like prior authorization for testing.