

XWELL Extends Collaboration with Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Traveler-Based Genomic Surveillance Program

08/17/23

Since August 2021, the program has served as a critical monitoring system for biological threats, leveraging voluntary sampling from international travelers at major U.S. airports

NEW YORK, Aug. 17, 2023 (GLOBE NEWSWIRE) -- XWELL, Inc. (Nasdaq: XWEL) today announced that they have renewed their support for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC's) Traveler-based Genomic Surveillance (TGS) [program](#) through a new contract awarded August 12 for approximately \$16 million. The innovative collaboration between CDC, XpresCheck and Concentric by Ginkgo Bioworks will continue for another year, expanding bio-surveillance capabilities across major U.S. airports.

"Through the renewed investment in this initiative, we and our partners are continuing to play an important role in U.S. biosecurity through its two major goals; early detection of new SARS-CoV-2 variants and other pathogens and by filling the gaps in global bio-surveillance," stated Ezra Ernst, Chief Executive Officer of XpresCheck. "With CDC and Concentric by Ginkgo Bioworks, we are providing public health officials with timely insights into pathogen evolution as well as peace of mind to travelers. We have learned that people are eager to protect themselves, their communities and their global neighbors, and TGS facilitates this."

Since August 2021, the program has conducted surveillance for SARS-CoV-2 to deliver timely public health insights into rare and emerging COVID-19 [variants and sublineages](#) and inform responses to outbreaks and surges. Last year, the program expanded to include tracking of influenza A and B viruses.

The joint biosecurity effort has grown to become the nation's first large-scale, sustained travel biosecurity platform, currently operating in six of the busiest international airports in the U.S.: John F. Kennedy International Airport (JFK); Newark Liberty International Airport (EWR); San Francisco International Airport (SFO), Los Angeles International Airport (LAX), Seattle-Tacoma International Airport (SEA) and Washington Dulles International Airport (IAD). International travelers arriving at these airports from select countries can enroll in the program on a voluntary basis and be sampled for SARS-CoV-2 and other pathogens.

Since the TGS program began, approximately 250,000 individuals from more than 135 countries have voluntarily tested for COVID-19. TGS now averages 7,000 individual tests per week across the six major international airports in the U.S. Notably, TGS detected numerous Omicron variants up to six weeks before they were reported globally.

CDC, Concentric by Ginkgo Bioworks and XpresCheck continue to lead deployment and development efforts on the use of wastewater monitoring from arriving aircraft and airport facilities as an innovative new tool for travel biosecurity, and plan to work with CDC to explore deployment at scale as a part of the pathogen monitoring program.

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Source: XWELL, Inc.