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Siena Construction Completes COVID Testing Center for Broad Institute

CAMBRIDGE, MA – In March 2020, Siena Construction completed a fast-track laboratory conversion project for the Broad Institute of MIT and Harvard, providing an important addition to the scientific research challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Broad is a renowned biomedical and genomic research center located in Cambridge, Massachusetts. As part of a rapidly evolving response to address the COVID-19 pandemic, Siena acted as construction manager on the building of Broad’s clinical lab space to be used for diagnostic testing of the COVID virus. Broad’s Genomics Platform worked with teams across the Institute to swiftly transform the CLIA-certified CRSP lab into a high-throughput COVID-19 testing facility within the Broad’s 320 Charles Street building.

A continuation of Siena’s ongoing collaboration with Broad, Siena’s construction management team partnered with Broad’s facilities, security, and health and safety teams to reconfigure the CRSP space over a weekend in mid-March. Working within an original open lab space, Siena’s team constructed new temporary walls to isolate work, cabinets and hoods, with infectious samples, which also required adjusted air flows for safety. The team moved and installed an unused fume hood from Broad’s 75 Ames Street building, a difficult yet essential task, as new hoods typically take months to be manufactured and delivered.

Siena also installed additional containment, safety, and cleaning equipment – including Robotic liquid handlers, and safety cabinets – to keep researchers safe. The team worked double shifts throughout that weekend and completed the new testing space on March 18, ahead of an already tight schedule.

Siena’s President Terrence Hayes reflected on the successful collaboration and potential positive impacts on public health and safety.

“It’s an honor to continue to assist Broad in their research and development, and especially during this critical time,” Terrence said. “We learn more about this new virus every day, so a timely and thoughtful mitigation plan can literally save lives. Our history of partnering with Broad was of vital importance in communicating needs and mobilizing action to meet the required schedule. I’m very proud of Siena’s team who jumped into action, utilizing their laboratory experience to complete Broad’s facility so that testing could begin. We’re already seeing the public health benefits, as test numbers continue to increase across the state.”

A vital addition to local research, Broad’s testing facility is able to process 4,000 COVID tests per day. Due to the overwhelming need for testing, Siena also recently completed a second phase with additional facility capabilities for Broad at 320 Charles Street. For more information behind the science of Broad’s COVID testing approach: <https://www.broadinstitute.org/news/how-broad-institute-converted-clinical-processing-lab-large-scale-covid-19-testing-facility>.

Founded in 1991, Siena Construction is a Cambridge-based construction management firm, specializing in renovations for the life sciences, commercial, higher education, and hospitality sectors. For more information, please visit sienaconstruction.com.

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