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## Quincy company staffs state coronavirus tracing program

By Joe DiFazio

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QUINCY — When Boston-based nonprofit Partners in Health needed more than 1,000 workers as part of a coronavirus tracing initiative created by the the state, it turned to a Quincy human resources company to help.

GattiHR, on Greenleaf Street near Quincy Center, has helped Partners in Health hire about 1,200 workers during April to be a part of the state's tracing efforts. The workers will reach out to as many coronavirus patients in Massachusetts as possible, both to connect them with health resources and to acquire contact information for everyone with whom patients recently interacted. The team of tracers will then attempt to reach out to patients' contacts to inform them of the possible exposure and offer isolation resources, which public health officials say can help limit further spread of coronavirus.

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Gov. Charlie Baker announced the \$44 million effort at the beginning of April as a wide-scale expansion of what [some local boards of health](#) were already doing.

Diana Lavery, GattiHR's sales research and marketing director, said the staffing project was the biggest the company has taken on. They typically specialize in executive recruitment.

"So we pivoted a bit from doing high-level executive recruiting to this, high-velocity recruiting," Lavery said. "I mean, we are helping to build a company from scratch, starting with zero employees to now 1,200 in just four weeks time."

Lavery said the company, as of Wednesday, had more than 36,000 applicants. The company has an online platform it used to help sort candidate's resumes. Those who moved on had to answer a round of questions with an artificial-intelligence screener. The

final round in the hiring process involved a taped video of candidates answering questions.

“All the roles are 100-percent remote, which is also pretty crazy that we’re hiring a complete remote workforce,” said Lavery, whose company is also working remotely amid the pandemic. “We are experiencing what everyone else is experiencing ... I feel like this is bringing us closer to the overall crisis and being a part of the initiative to help solve that crisis is very rewarding.”

Lavery said work in health care was a plus for candidates, but empathy and communication skills were also traits for which they were looking.

“Being a good communicator is important. Being professional, having positive attitudes and work ethics, but, most importantly, being able to show and express empathy because you are working with people who are going through a crisis right now and their lives are changing,” Lavery said. “Being able to make a connection with those people and help them through this tough time is one of the most important qualities in being a contact tracer and being part of the contact tracing initiative.”

Baker has said that the program is up and running and the tracing team has contacted about 5,000 individuals.

Baker said tracing is a key element of efforts to mitigate the spread of the highly contagious disease. When the effort was launched, Baker said during his press availability on Thursday, it was projected that each person who has COVID-19 would have about 10 close contacts. The average number of contacts, according to the governor, has turned out to only be two, which he said means efforts to stay home and socially distance have been working.

GattiHR said it's close to filling out the biggest need, the contact tracers, but is still looking for a smaller number of more experienced people for care resource coordinator and case investigator jobs. Lavery said the resource coordinators were already operating in 75 percent of the state's zip codes.

The state sees robust testing coupled with the tracing efforts, as the way to curb the coronavirus, with an eye toward beginning to re-open shuttered parts of the economy. Partners in Health, renowned for its work battling infectious diseases in some of the world's poorest countries, is coordinating the

program with the state's Department of Public Health and Department of Health and Human Services.

*Material from State House News Service was used in this report.*

*Reporter Joe Difazio can be reached at [jdifazio@patriotledger.com](mailto:jdifazio@patriotledger.com).*