



**WATCHFIRE™ by bioMérieux:  
a PCR test to detect viruses and bacteria in wastewater  
and respond to potential infectious disease outbreaks**

Marcy l'Étoile, France – April 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2025 – bioMérieux, a world leader in the field of *in vitro* diagnostics, today announces the launch of its WATCHFIRE™ molecular testing solution. The WATCHFIRE™ Respiratory (R) Panel, targeting 22 pathogens\*, will run on the BIOFIRE® FILMARRAY® TORCH instrument, integrated with FIREWORKS™ software, to deliver real-time trending of viruses and bacteria present in wastewater samples.

Wastewater and Environmental Surveillance (WES) is a testing method used to estimate the health status of a given population by measuring the downstream presence or quantity of associated pathogens. Further highlighted during the SARS-CoV-2 pandemic<sup>1</sup>, this approach has generated increased interest<sup>2</sup> in giving comprehensive health information in communities. It ideally complements clinical surveillance and is even more valuable in limited resources settings<sup>3</sup>. Not only can wastewater be used to detect pathogens of concern such as SARS-CoV-2, influenza A and B viruses, or RSV, it allows also for the detection of Antimicrobial Resistant Genes (ARGs).

For use on the BIOFIRE® FILMARRAY® TORCH system, the WATCHFIRE™ R Panel is a unique multiplex 22-target PCR test detecting nucleic acids of common respiratory viruses and bacteria\* shed in feces and detectable in wastewater samples, in about 45 minutes. Using the web-hosted FIREWORKS™ software compatible with our molecular BIOFIRE® range, an early warning alert can be provided from the detection and trending of pathogens from composite wastewater influent samples taken from community level watersheds. These alerts may help Public Health authorities to take data-driven decisions and appropriate actions.

*“Wastewater and environmental surveillance have become important public health strategies for detecting and monitoring infectious diseases at a population level. Monitoring trends over time can enable the early detection of an outbreak and can aid in our understanding of the disease burden in a community. This provides important insights to health professionals to inform strategies for containment and resource management planning. With the launch of the WATCHFIRE™ Solution, bioMérieux continues to demonstrate its commitment to empowering clinicians and public health officials with the latest technology to help make the world a healthier place.”* stated Dr Charles K. Cooper, Executive Vice President, Chief Medical Officer, bioMérieux

The WATCHFIRE™ R Panel is the first test composing the WATCHFIRE™ Solution to be used by operators in a decentralized or near source lab setting. The panel is run on BIOFIRE® FILMARRAY® TORCH which provides enhanced flexibility and real-time analysis to ensure improved surveillance and greater operational efficiency.

*“We are truly excited to leverage our in vitro diagnostic expertise and enter the wastewater and environmental surveillance segment with our innovative WATCHFIRE™ Solution. Powered by the trusted BIOFIRE® molecular technology, WATCHFIRE™ provides efficient, closer-to-source testing of multiple pathogens from a single sample in about one hour, with limited hands-on time. Featuring real-time analysis for valuable insights, this scalable solution empowers public health authorities to quickly identify*



wastewater pathogen trends – enabling affected communities to make informed decisions and proactively take action. It’s an absolute game-changer in bioMérieux’s quest to help make the world a healthier place.” added Jennifer Zinn, Executive Vice President, Clinical Operations.

The WATCHFIRE™ R Panel – for respiratory pathogens present in wastewater – will be available worldwide in the second quarter of 2025. It will be followed by the WATCHFIRE™ Gastrointestinal (G) panel, addressing enteric pathogens in sewage, in the third quarter, to further expand bioMérieux’s presence in the wastewater and environmental surveillance segment.

\* **Viruses:** Adenovirus, Coronavirus 229E, Coronavirus HKU1, Coronavirus NL63, Coronavirus OC43, Severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2), Human metapneumovirus, Human rhinovirus/enterovirus, Influenza A virus, Influenza A virus A/H1, Influenza A virus A/H3, Influenza A virus A/H1-2009, Influenza B virus, Parainfluenza virus 1, Parainfluenza virus 2, Parainfluenza virus 3, Parainfluenza virus 4, Respiratory syncytial virus

**Bacteria:** Bordetella parapertussis, Bordetella pertussis, Chlamydia pneumoniae, Mycoplasma pneumoniae

<sup>1</sup> [COVID-19 wastewater | WHO COVID-19 dashboard](#)

<sup>2</sup> [Why Is Wastewater Surveillance Important? – Public Health Alliance for Genomic Epidemiology](#)

<sup>3</sup> [Wastewater Surveillance in Low-Resource Waste Systems | National Wastewater Surveillance System | CDC](#)

## ABOUT BIOMÉRIEUX

*Pioneering Diagnostics*

A world leader in the field of *in vitro* diagnostics since 1963, bioMérieux is present in 45 countries and serves more than 160 countries with the support of a large network of distributors. In 2024, revenues reached €4 billion, with over 93% of sales outside of France.

bioMérieux provides diagnostic solutions (systems, reagents, software and services) which determine the source of disease and contamination to improve patient health and ensure consumer safety. Its products are mainly used for diagnosing infectious diseases. They are also used for detecting microorganisms in agri-food, pharmaceutical and cosmetic products.

[www.biomerieux.com](http://www.biomerieux.com).



bioMérieux is listed on the Euronext Paris stock market.

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