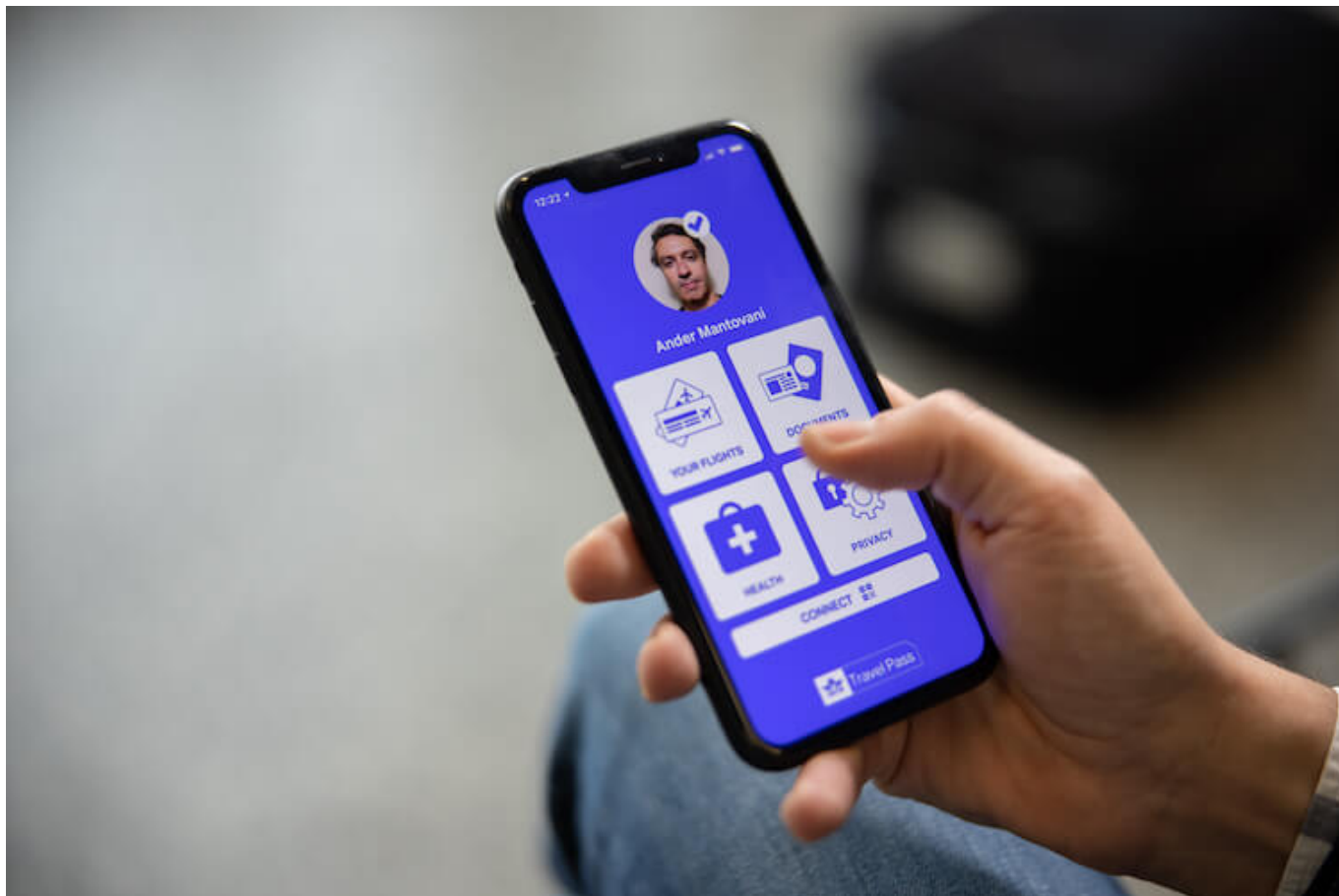


IATA partners with Synlab to expand COVID testing network

This is a special feature from *PAX International's* [September 2021 WTCE Virtual](#) digital edition, on [page 57](#).



Travel Pass in one of the most extensively used travel tools for handling COVID-19 related requirements

Globetrotters that sign on with the [IATA Travel Pass](#) app in the post-pandemic world will now be able to access a network of more than 2,000 testing labs from departure locations through a new partnership with a well-known medical diagnostic services provider.

The agreement between the [International Air Transport Association](#) and [SYNLAB](#) was announced in mid-August. The two parties touted the agreement as an important step in a world where requirements for entry and exit of various countries are changing constantly.

After passengers are tested at their departure location, SYNLAB will provide them with certified test results directly through the IATA Travel Pass app. The app checks the result against the Travel Pass registry of national entry requirements to produce an “OK To Travel” status. In turn, passengers can share their status and the digital test certificates with authorities and airlines to facilitate travel.

“Proof of a negative COVID-19 test is a requirement for travel to many countries. Understanding what type of test is required and where to get tested can be time consuming and complex for travelers,” says Nick Careen, IATA’s Senior Vice President for Operations, Safety and Security. “IATA Travel Pass

provides a one-stop-shop for passengers to find out what COVID requirements are needed for travel, where they can get tested and verify that they are 'OK to Travel.'"

Travel Pass is one of the most extensively used travel tools for handling COVID-19 related requirements. It is currently being trialed by more than 70 airlines and 245 routes across the world.

SYNLAB is a Europe-based medical diagnostic services provider. It offers more than 5,000 types of clinical tests across all medical disciplines. Operating in 36 countries, SYNLAB provides services to more than 100 million patients a year. Since the outbreak of COVID-19, SYNLAB has conducted more than 30 million COVID-19-related PCR tests.

The two partners worked over the past several months in a pilot project, testing passengers on Colombia.

Further development of the IATA Travel Pass app is also in the works. Careen says the group is working in Europe and now has the ability to upload the EU Digital COVID Certificate ([DCC](#)) and the [UK National Health Service COVID Pass](#) onto the app. This gives travelers a place to store verified vaccine records.

"This information can be shared with airlines and border control authorities who can have the assurance that the certificate presented to them is genuine and belongs to the person presenting it," adds Careen.

What is slowing IATA's ability to integrate vaccine records from other countries is the absence of a global standard. Without a standard developed by the [World Health Organization](#), Careen says the restart of full international travel would continue to be hampered.