



Republic of the Philippines
Department of Health
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

March 19, 2020

DEPARTMENT CIRCULAR

No. 2020 - 0143

TO: ALL UNDERSECRETARIES AND ASSISTANT SECRETARIES; DIRECTORS OF BUREAUS, SERVICES AND CENTERS FOR HEALTH DEVELOPMENT; MINISTER OF HEALTH – BANGSAMORO AUTONOMOUS REGION IN MUSLIM MINDANAO; EXECUTIVE DIRECTORS OF SPECIALTY HOSPITALS AND NATIONAL NUTRITION COUNCIL; DIRECTOR GENERAL OF PHILIPPINES INSTITUTE OF TRADITIONAL MEDICINE AND ALTERNATIVE HEALTH CARE; CHIEFS OF MEDICAL CENTERS, HOSPITALS, SANITARIA AND INSTITUTES; PRESIDENT OF THE PHILIPPINE HEALTH INSURANCE CORPORATION; DIRECTORS OF PHILIPPINE NATIONAL AIDS COUNCIL SECRETARIAT AND TREATMENT AND REHABILITATION CENTERS AND ALL OTHERS CONCERNED

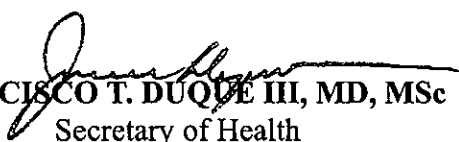
SUBJECT: Public Advisory No. 20 - COVID-19 Laboratory Testing

With the increasing COVID-19 cases in the country, there is also a subsequent increase in the demand for testing kits all over the country. However, there is still no consensus on how to utilize the testing kits procured from different sources. As such, the Department of Health (DOH) hereby issues this advisory to guide the various healthcare institutions in the use of commercially available test kits:

1. The current recommended testing kit for COVID-19 are the Real Time - Polymerase Chain Reaction (RT-PCR) based testing kits.
2. There is currently no clear evidence to support the use of lateral flow rapid (IgG/IgM) tests in the diagnosis of COVID-19.
3. To date, there are four (4) testing kits approved by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) for commercial use.
4. Due to the potential hazards of processing the sample, only laboratories where processes have been quality-assured or certified by the DOH-RITM are allowed to process RT-PCR based kits. Private hospitals and laboratories, and university-based laboratories shall undergo DOH-RITM assessment before being allowed to process any sample regardless of FDA registration status of the test kits.

Rest assured, the DOH shall continue to find efficient ways to respond to the increasing demand for COVID-19 testing in the country.

Dissemination of the information to all concerned is requested.


FRANCISCO T. DUQUE III, MD, MSc
Secretary of Health