



Republic of the Philippines
Department of Health
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

21 April 2020

DEPARTMENT MEMORANDUM

No. 2020- 0191

TO : ALL UNDERSECRETARIES AND ASSISTANT SECRETARIES; MINISTER OF HEALTH – BANGSAMORO AUTONOMOUS REGION IN MUSLIM MINDANAO; DIRECTORS OF CENTERS FOR HEALTH DEVELOPMENT (CHD), BUREAUS AND SERVICES; EXECUTIVE DIRECTORS OF SPECIALTY HOSPITALS AND NATIONAL NUTRITION COUNCIL; CHIEFS OF MEDICAL CENTERS, HOSPITALS, SANITARIA AND INSTITUTES; PRESIDENT OF THE PHILIPPINE HEALTH INSURANCE CORPORATION; DIRECTORS OF PHILIPPINE NATIONAL AIDS COUNCIL, TREATMENT AND REHABILITATION CENTERS AND OTHERS CONCERNED

SUBJECT : Designation of Selected Regional TB Culture Laboratories for GeneXpert Diagnosis of Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)

The World Health Organization declared the outbreak of Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) as a pandemic last 11 March 2020. Early isolation and treatment of cases relies on adequate detection and diagnosis of COVID-19. Testing capacity should therefore be increased through continued certification and capacity-building of laboratories alongside use of alternative testing strategies.

The Xpert Xpress SARS-CoV-2 test is a rapid, real-time, in-vitro RT-PCR test for the qualitative detection of nucleic acid from the SARS-CoV-2 virus that causes COVID-19. The US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) issued Emergency Use Authorization for the system last 21 March 2020. The Philippine FDA subsequently gave approval on 26 March 2020.

These test cartridges can be reconfigured in GeneXpert machines to detect SARS-CoV-2 virus. The Department of Health hereby designates the following TB Culture Laboratories and hospital based GeneXpert sites of the National TB Control Program as COVID testing facilities using the GeneXpert system:

Region	Province / City	Name of Facility	Type of Facility
NCR	City of Muntinlupa	National TB Reference Laboratory (Research Institute of Tropical Medicine)	NRL for TB
NCR	City of Manila	San Lazaro Hospital	TB Culture Lab
NCR	Quezon City	Lung Center of the Philippines	Rapid TB Diagnostic Laboratory (H-Xpert)
NCR	Quezon City	PTSI - Quezon Institute	TB Culture Lab
I	Pangasinan	Region 1 Medical Center	Rapid TB Diagnostic

			Laboratory (H-Xpert)
I	La Union	Ilocos Training and Regional Medical Center	TB Culture Lab
II	Tuguegarao City	Cagayan Valley CHD TB Reference Laboratory	TB Culture Lab
IV-A	Batangas	Batangas Medical Center	TB Culture Lab
IV-B	City of Puerto Princesa	Ospital ng Palawan	TB Culture Lab
V	Camarines Sur	Bicol Medical Center	Rapid TB Diagnostic Laboratory (H-Xpert)
VIII	Leyte	Eastern Visayas CHD TB Reference Laboratory	TB Culture Lab
IX	Zamboanga City	Zamboanga City Medical Center	TB Culture Lab
X	Cagayan de Oro City	Northern Mindanao Medical Center	Rapid TB Diagnostic Laboratory (H-Xpert)
XI	Davao del Norte	Davao Regional Medical Center	TB Culture Lab
XI	Davao City	Davao TB Reference Laboratory	TB Culture Lab
XII	Cotabato City	Cotabato Regional Medical Center	TB Culture Lab

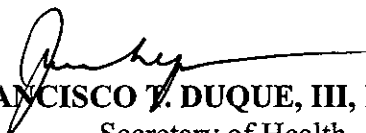
The Research Institute for Tropical Medicine - National Tuberculosis Reference Laboratory (RITM-NTRL) with the Health Facilities and Services Regulatory Bureau shall assess these facilities for compliance with requirements in conducting testing for COVID-19 as specified in Administrative Order No. 2020-0014, entitled "Guidelines in Securing a License to Operate a COVID-19 Testing Laboratory in the Philippines."

These facilities shall also submit a list of staff to be trained on GeneXpert testing for COVID-19 to RITM-NTRL. They shall undergo two-day online training. Certification will be provided upon completion of training.

These designated TB Culture Laboratories and hospital-based GeneXpert sites shall be provided with the Xpert Xpress SARS-CoV-2 cartridges. Operations shall commence once cartridges are available and personnel training is completed. Reporting of results shall be done in accordance with Administrative Order No. 2020-0013, entitled "Revised Guidelines for the Inclusion of COVID-19 in the List of Notifiable Diseases for Mandatory Reporting to the Department of Health."

For further inquiries, you may contact Dr. Anna Marie Celina G. Garfin, National TB Program Manager at garfinamc@gmail.com or 0917-821-9808.

For strict compliance and dissemination to all concerned.


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