



Republic of the Philippines
Department of Health
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

October 05, 2020

DEPARTMENT MEMORANDUM

No. 2020 - 0446

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

SUBJECT: Advisory on the Temporary Suspension for Select Regions on Securing License to Operate for COVID-19 Testing Laboratories using GeneXpert Technique

I. BACKGROUND

Among the top priorities of the Department of Health (DOH) is to increase the capacity of the health system to be able to identify those infected and determine the appropriate level of care and facilities that can cater to them. Requisite to this is expanding the capacity of laboratories in the country to be able to accommodate and conduct more tests.

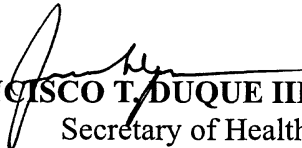
As part of the continuous efforts to increase the national laboratory capacity to detect the SARS-CoV-2 virus, the DOH has augmented the use of GeneXpert® machines for COVID-19 testing. However, given the challenges in the limited supply and allocation of Xpert® Xpress SARS-CoV-2, there is a need to rationalize the licensing of COVID-19 testing laboratories using the GeneXpert technique. Hence, these guidelines are being issued.

II. IMPLEMENTING GUIDELINES

1. All licensed COVID-19 testing laboratories using GeneXpert shall prioritize vulnerable patients and at-risk individuals in testing, in accordance to Department Memorandum No. 2020-0376 entitled "Prioritization of COVID-19 Testing using Xpert Xpress SARS-CoV-2 Cartridges."
2. Starting October 10, 2020, the Department shall temporarily suspend accepting additional applications for license-to-operate (LTO) of laboratories who will use GeneXpert procedure until steady supply of these cartridges is secured.
3. All laboratories with pending applications (Stages 1 to 4) for LTO shall still be processed.

4. Licensed COVID-19 testing laboratories with already existing rRT-PCR testing will not be allowed to apply for LTO for use of GeneXpert.
5. The DOH shall still accept applications for LTOs of COVID-19 testing laboratories using GeneXpert in regions or provinces **with limited access to real time Reverse Transcriptase-Polymerase Chain Reaction (rRT-PCR)**, particularly the following:
 - a. Regions with **three (3) or less** licensed COVID-19 testing rRT-PCR laboratories (Regions I, II, IV-B, V, VIII, IX, XI, XII, X, CAR, CARAGA, BARMM, as of October 05, 2020. *See Annex A.*); and
 - b. Regions with **at least 30%** Geographically-Isolated and Disadvantaged Areas (GIDAs) barangays per province (*See Annex A: DM 2020-0277, Consolidated List of GIDAs based on Submission of Centers for Health Development (CHDs) and Ministry of Health-Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao as of April 30, 2019.*).
6. Distribution and allocation of Xpert® Xpress SARS-CoV-2 cartridges shall also prioritize regions and areas indicated in item 5.
7. All CHDs are advised to focus their efforts in capacitating their areas in establishing molecular laboratories with Biosafety Level 2 capacity.

For strict compliance.


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

Annex A. List of Licensed rRT-PCR COVID-19 Testing Laboratories per Region as of October 5

	NAME OF HEALTH FACILITY OR LABORATORY	REGION	
1	Baguio General Hospital and Medical Center	CAR	
2	Parkway Medical and Diagnostic Center		
3	AL Molecular Diagnostic Laboratory	NCR	
4	Asian Hospital & Medical Center		
5	BioPath Clinical Diagnostic, Inc.		
6	Chinese Gen. Hospital		
7	De Los Santos Medical Center		
8	Detoxicare Molecular Diagnostics Laboratory		
9	Dr. Jose B. Rodriguez Memorial Hospital and Sanitarium		
10	Fe del Mundo Medical Center		
11	First Aide Contact Center		
12	Health Delivery Systems		
13	Hi-Precision (QC)		
14	Kaiser Medical Center Inc.		
15	Las Pinas General Hospital and Satellite Trauma Center		
16	Lung Center of the Philippines		
17	Makati Medical Center		
18	Manila Doctors Hospital		
19	Marikina Molecular Diagnostic Laboratory		
20	National Kidney and Transplant Institute		
21	New World Diagnostics Inc. Premium Medical Branch		
22	Pasig City Children's Hospital - Child's Hope		
23	Philippine Airport Diagnostic Laboratory		
24	Philippine Children's Medical Center		
25	Philippine Genome Center UP-Diliman		
26	Philippine Red Cross - National Blood Center		
27	Philippine Red Cross - Port Area		
28	PNP Crime Laboratory		
29	PRC - PRC Logistics and Multipurpose Center		
30	Research Institute for Tropical Medicine		
31	Safeguard DNA Diagnostics, Inc.		
32	San Lazaro Hospital		
33	San Miguel Foundation Testing Laboratory		
34	Singapore Diagnostic, Inc.		
35	St. Luke's Medical Center - BGC		
36	St. Luke's Medical Center- QC		
37	Sta. Ana Hospital		
38	Taguig City Molecular Laboratory		
39	The Lord's Grace Medical and Industrial Clinic		
40	The Medical City - Ortigas		
41	The Premier Molecular Diagnostics		
42	Tropical Disease Foundation		
43	University of Perpetual Help System Dalta		
44	UP National Institutes of Health		
45	UP-Philippine General Hospital-Medical Research Laboratory		
46	Valenzuela Hope Molecular Laboratory		
47	Veteran Memorial Medical Center		
48	V. Luna Medical Center -AFRIMS - Collaborative Molecular Laboratory		
49	Dagupan Doctors Villaflor Memorial Hospital		I
50	Ilocos Training Regional Medical Center		

51	Mariano Marcos Memorial Hospital	
52	Cagayan Valley Medical Center Molecular Laboratory	II
53	Bataan General Hospital	III
54	Bulacan Medical Center	
55	Graman Medical & Maternity Hospital Inc. Molecular Laboratory	
56	Green City Medical Center	
57	J B. Lingad Memorial Hospital	
58	Marilao Medical and Diagnostic Clinic, Inc.	
59	Philippine Red Cross - Logistics and Training Center	
60	Philippine Red Cross Clark Molecular Laboratory	III
61	Qualimed Hospital - San Jose Del Monte	
62	Tarlac Provincial Hospital Molecular Laboratory	
63	Calamba Medical Center	IV-A
64	Daniel O. Mercado Medical Center	
65	DLSU - Cavite	
66	Laguna Provincial Hospital - San Pablo City District Hospital	
67	Lucena United Doctors Hospital and Medical Center	
68	Mary Mediatrix Medical Center	
69	Ospital ng Imus	
70	PRC- Batangas Chapter Molecular Laboratory	
71	Qualimed Hospital Sta. Rosa	
72	San Pablo College Medical Center	
73	UPLB COVID-19 Molecular Laboratory	V
74	Bicol Regional Diagnostic and Reference Laboratory	
75	Bacolod Queen of Mercy Hospital	
76	Corazon Locsin Montelibano Memorial Regional Hospital	VI
77	Dr. Rafael S. Tumbokon Memorial Hospital	
78	Metro Iloilo Hospital and Medical Center	
79	PRC - Negros Occidental Molecular Laboratory	
80	Qualimed Health Network - Iloilo	
81	Teresita Jalandoni Provincial Hospital	
82	The Doctors Hospital, Inc.	
83	Western Visayas Medical Center	VII
84	Allegiant Regional Care Hospital	
85	Bohol Containerized PCR Laboratory	
86	Cebu Doctors University Hospital, Inc.	
87	Cebu TB Reference Laboratory	
88	Chong Hua Hospital	
89	Governor Celestino Gallares Memorial Medical Center	
90	Philippine Red Cross - Cebu Chapter	
91	Prime Care Alpha Covid-19 Testing Laboratory	
92	University of Cebu Medical Center	
93	Vicente Sotto Memorial Medical Center	VIII
94	Divine Word Hospital	
95	Eastern Visayas Regional COVID-19 Testing Center	IX
96	Ciudad Medical Zamboanga	
97	Philippine Red Cross - Molecular Biology Laboratory	
98	Zamboanga City Medical Center-Department of Agriculture Satellite Lab. for COVID-19 Testing	

99	Lanao Del Norte COVID-19 Testing Laboratory	X
100	Maria Reyna Xavier University Hospital, Inc.	
101	Northern Mindanao TB Regional Center	
102	Philippine Red Cross - Cagayan de Oro Chapter	
103	Polymedic Medical Plaza	XI
104	Davao One World Diagnostic Center Incorporated	
105	Southern Philippines Medical Center	
106	Cotabato Regional Medical Center	XII
107	Dr. Jorge P. Royeca Hospital	
108	Butuan Medical Center	CARAGA

"ANNEX B"

Comparative Summary of Geographically-Isolated and Disadvantaged Areas (GIDA) (2010 and 2019)

PROVINCE	Total No. of Barangays as of 31 December 2018	2010 GIDA Barangays	Regional Submission as of 30 April 2019	% of GIDA Brgys per Province
Ilocos Region updated as of 2019				
1 Ilocos Norte	559	7	23	4.11%
2 Ilocos Sur	768	170	169	22.01%
3 La Union	576	304	263	45.66%
4 Pangasinan	1364	34	57	4.18%
Region 1 Total	3267	515	512	15.67%
Cordillera Administrative Region updated as of 2015				
1 Abra	303	172	179	59.08%
2 Apayao	133	63	77	57.89%
3 Benguet	140	30	65	46.43%
4 Kalinga	152	34	48	31.58%
5 Ifugao	176	93	113	64.20%
6 Mt. Province	144	47	46	31.94%
7 Baguio City	129	NO GIDA	38	29.46%
CAR Total	1177	439	566	48.09%
Cagayan Valley Region updated as of 2019				
1 Batanes	29	29	29	100.00%
2 Cagayan	820	196	178	21.71%
3 Isabela	1055	173	368	34.88%
4 Nueva Vizcaya	275	31	167	60.73%
5 Quirino	132	38	50	37.88%
Region 2 Total	2311	467	792	34.27%
Central Luzon Region updated as of 2017				
1 Aurora	151	32	19	12.58%
2 Bataan	237	28	47	19.83%
3 Bulacan	569	2	14	2.46%
4 Nueva Ecija	849	74	38	4.48%
5 Pampanga	505	NO GIDA	25	4.95%
6 Tarlac	511	61	17	3.33%
7 Zambales	230	74	54	23.48%
Region 3 Total	3052	271	214	7.01%
CALABARZON Region updated as of 2019				
1 Batangas	1078	25	48	4.45%
2 Cavite	829	1	2	0.24%
3 Laguna	681	14	23	3.38%
4 Rizal	189	15	15	7.94%
5 Quezon	1209	41	259	21.42%
Region 4a Total	3986	96	347	8.71%
MIMAROPA Region updated as of 2016				
1 Marinduque	218	8	30	13.76%
2 Occidental Mindoro	164	9	61	37.20%
3 Oriental Mindoro	426	20	61	14.32%
4 Palawan	367	30	231	62.94%
5 Puerto Princesa City	66	NO GIDA	5	7.58%
6 Romblon	219	33	84	38.36%
Region 4b Total	1460	100	472	32.33%

Bicol Region updated as of 2018					
1	Albay	720	89	121	16.81%
2	Camarines Norte	282	58	68	24.11%
3	Camarines Sur	1063	258	471	44.31%
4	Catanduanes	315	101	143	45.40%
5	Masbate	550	NO GIDA	209	38.00%
6	Sorsogon	541	36	197	36.41%
Region 5 Total		3471	542	1209	34.83%
Western Visayas Region updated as of 2018					
1	Aklan	327	95	110	33.64%
2	Antique	590	191	120	20.34%
3	Capiz	473	99	117	24.74%
4	Iloilo	1721	319	414	24.06%
5	Guimaras	98	21	31	31.63%
6	Negros Occidental	601	72	159	26.46%
Region 6 Total		3810	797	951	24.96%
Central Visayas Region updated as of 2018					
1	Bohol	1109	64	327	29.49%
2	Cebu	1066	35	153	14.35%
3	Negros Oriental	557	28	111	19.93%
4	Siquijor	134	15	8	5.97%
Region 7 Total		2866	142	599	20.90%
Eastern Visayas Region updated as of 2019					
1	Biliran	132	25	19	14.39%
2	Eastern Samar	597	122	161	26.97%
3	Leyte	1503	4	134	8.92%
4	Northern Samar	569	50	312	54.83%
5	Samar(Western Samar)	951	164	454	47.74%
6	Southern Leyte	500	15	30	6.00%
Region 8 Total		4252	380	1110	26.11%
Zamboanga Peninsula Region updated as of 2017					
1	Zamboanga del Norte	691	105	596	86.25%
2	Zamboanga del Sur	681	NO GIDA	243	35.68%
3	Zamboanga Sibugay	389	51	153	39.33%
4	Zamboanga City	98	NO GIDA	56	57.14%
5	Isabela City	45	NO GIDA	29	64.44%
Region 9 Total		1904	156	1077	56.57%
Northern Mindanao Region updated as of 2017					
1	Bukidnon	464	185	196	42.24%
2	Camiguin	58	27	27	46.55%
3	Lanao del Norte	462	83	206	44.59%
4	Misamis Occidental	490	60	124	25.31%
5	Misamis Oriental	424	11	177	41.75%
Region 10 Total		1898	223	730	38.46%

Davao Region updated as of 2012					
1	Compostela Valley	237	56	112	47.26%
2	Davao del Norte	223	8	77	34.53%
3	Davao del Sur	232	26	67	28.88%
4	Davao Oriental	183	49	100	54.64%
5	Davao Occidental	105	NO GIDA	86	81.90%
6	Davao City	182	NO GIDA	27	14.84%
Region 11 Total		1162	139	469	40.36%
SOCCSKSARGEN Region updated as of 2018					
1	North Cotabato	543	4	294	54.14%
2	Saranggani	141	20	78	55.32%
3	South Cotabato	199	69	106	53.27%
4	Sultan Kudarat	249	65	94	37.75%
5	General Santos City	26	NO GIDA	NO GIDA	0.00%
6	Cotabato City	37	NO GIDA	NO GIDA	0.00%
Region 12 Total		1195	158	572	47.87%
Caraga Region updated as of 2018					
1	Agusan del Norte	167	26	48	28.74%
2	Agusan del Sur	314	125	154	49.04%
3	Dinagat Island	100	35	33	33.00%
4	Surigao del Norte	335	85	90	26.87%
5	Surigao del Sur	309	24	77	24.92%
6	Butuan City	86	NO GIDA	NO GIDA	0.00%
Region 13 Total		1311	295	402	30.66%
BARMM updated as of 2017					
1	Basilan	210	NO DATA	58	27.62%
2	Lanao del Sur	1159	NO DATA	275	23.73%
3	Maguindanao	508	NO DATA	273	53.74%
4	Sulu	410	NO DATA	136	33.17%
5	Tawi-Tawi	203	NO DATA	84	41.38%
6	Marawi City	96	NO DATA	12	12.50%
7	Lamitan City	45	NO DATA	15	33.33%
BARMM Total		2631	0	853	32.42%
GRAND TOTAL		39,753	4,720	10,875	27.36%