

UNITED REPUBLIC OF TANZANIA



MINISTRY OF HEALTH, COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT, GENDER, ELDERLY AND CHILDREN

COVID-19 SAMPLE COLLECTION GUIDE FOR THE IDENTIFIED HEALTH FACILITIES FIRST VERSION, JANUARY 14, 2021.

1. INTRODUCTION:

The COVID-19 pandemic has continued to affect different countries on the globe since it was first reported in December 2019. As of 05th January 2021 a total of 83,322,449 cases and 1,831,412 deaths have been reported worldwide. Different countries have continued to take a variety of measures to control the pandemic including the prerequisite for COVID-19 test for all travelers, cancellation of international flights and several lock downs. Tanzania is one of the countries that have taken effective control measures that have facilitated the pandemic under control.

This guide is brought into being in reflection of the world's growing number of cases and the emergence of a new subtypes of COVID-19 virus (new strains) in some countries, with rising costs of COVID-19 testing, new technologies in testing and increased testing requirements.

2. WHO DESERVES A TEST

- a) All patients suspected of COVID-19 will be attended and recommended for a test by a Clinician at a facility visited by such a patient based on the current guidelines. These patients will undergo sample collection within the clinical vicinity.
- b) All travelers abroad whereby the destiny country required a negative COVID-19 test certificate on arrival, will undergo COVID-19 test regardless of the clinical presentation (symptomatic or asymptomatic) in the allocated room or area.

3. CUSTOMER SERVICE (RECEPTION):

A hospital or any other facility must establish a special desk at the reception to handle clients in need of COVID-19 test (Travelers) and mark an identification label as "**A desk for COVID-19 test to travelers abroad**". A hospital or any other facility is required to appoint a well-acquainted Health Care Worker who may be a Nurse or any Customer Care Officer with the capacity to use a Computer and understands well the Electronic System for COVID-19 test, so that they can easily direct customers in relation to the sample collection procedures, including how and where to obtain the Client specific payment control number (will be provided at the facility's reception) of which the payments can be made via Tigo pesa, Mpesa, Halopesa and agents of all Banks in the country before a Client undergoes sample collection procedure. When a Client makes the

payment, confirmation of the payments will be sent to their mobile phones, the client will display the mobile payment confirmation at the sample collection facility. It is important to adhere to infection prevention and control measures at all times for both Clients and Service Providers. It is recommended that facilities make arrangements on how to receive Clients' feedback regards to the service provided for improvement, including an opinion box as well as availability of essential services for Clients such as toilets based on various customer needs such as disabled and gender needs.

All sample collection facilities should set up a specific area or room to serve Clients who go for COVID-19 sample collection and it should be away from the rooms for attending other patients e.g. OPD or EMD. It is advised that, time of service for each client should exceed fifteen (15) minutes.

4. SAMPLE COLLECTION ROOM

There should be a room or specific area allocated for sample collection that will comply with the regulations, procedures and guidelines for Infection Prevention and Control Client confidentiality, equipped with essential equipment and Personal Protective Equipment (PPEs) and shouldn't be used for any other activities. All Clients will be registered on the "sample manifest form" that will be used to review the number of samples taken at the Facility against booking and samples transported.

5. SAMPLE COLLECTION, HANDLING AND TRANSPORTATION

All facilities are advised to comply with the Sample Management Guidelines for both RT PCR sample collected from the nose and throat (Nasopharyngeal and Oropharyngeal swabs). For travelers destined to China, the relevant facility will have to take two types of samples, one will involve nose and throat swabs and another one will involve blood (venipuncture) for IgM test. Management and transportation of samples should comply with the Guidelines, timely sample transportation and feedback response. It is emphasized that samples be transported within 24 hours to the National Laboratory (testing site) by an assigned Officer. Samples should be submitted to the National Laboratory as early as possible before 03:00pm for the Dar es Salaam region. Samples can be submitted in two phases, in the morning before 10:00am and the other before 03:00pm, so that the processing samples begins early and achieve the goal of providing test results within 24 hours. Each specified Facility will be required to provide a phone number for test results follow up. The National Public Health Laboratory mobile phone contacts if anyhow necessary, please contact via **0717156246 or 0716078422**.

6. PAYMENTS

After the Client obtains a specific payment number (control number), will be responsible for making payments before they can undergo sample collection. COVID-19 testing Charges are 230,000 Tshs. Ten percent (10%) of the test cost will be reimbursed to the particular facility, therefore there won't be any additional cost other than the indicated price for each client.

7. SAMPLE COLLECTION TIME SCHEDULE

Sample collection exercise will be held from 0900hrs until 1300hrs daily including Sundays and holidays to all identified facilities.

8. SAMPLE VERIFICATION

All samples should be verified in terms of the total number of samples to be transported per day and each sample's identification number (ID) before sample transportation to the National Public Health Laboratory. NPHL to verify that by total number and each sample's identification number. Moreover, to make sure that all samples have been transported to the National Public health laboratory, the facility focal person should communicate with the NPHL to verify by number and each sample's identification number (ID) daily.

9. TEST RESULTS AND CERTIFICATES

The test results will be provided via a mobile phone that will direct the link to download test results and certificates within 24 hours of the sample reaching the National Laboratory for Dar es Salaam Region and 48 hours outside Dar es Salaam Region. For any Client who won't get the test results on time, the relevant facility will have to immediately make follow up at the National Public Health Laboratory (NPHL) via **0717156246** or **0716078422**. It is insisted that all facilities adhere to the management guidelines to ensure clients who will test positive are well counselled and managed.

10. VERIFICATION OF TEST RESULTS

The facility's focal person should communicate with the National Public Health Laboratory (NPHL) Officers to verify that all the test results for that particular day have been submitted to the respective facilities before the clients present to the facilities or via phone call for follow up. In case of any delay of test results, immediate solution should be sought immediately.

This guide will be updated whenever necessary depending on the requirements.



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