CARPHA/SDPC/LSN/010/20  
Chief Medical Officers  
Laboratory Directors  
National Epidemiologists  

27th February 2020

Dear CMOs, Laboratory Directors and National Epidemiologists,

LABORATORY UPDATE 2: COVID-19 (SARS-CoV-2)

This is an update to the Laboratory Update 1 circulated on 5th February 2020.

The CARPHA Medical Microbiology Laboratory (CMML) has been actively responding to requests from Member States since 11th February 2020 when we announced our capacity to detect SARS-CoV-2, for the disease now known as COVID-19.

As of 26th February 2020, six (6) Member States have accessed our emergency service as described in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Summary of laboratory test results for SARS-CoV-2 conducted at CMML as at 26 February 2020. (Reference http://carpha.org/Portals/0/Documents/COVID19_CHINA_SitRep15.pdf)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Cumulative No. Patients</th>
<th>No. of Tests</th>
<th>Positive Tests for COVID-19</th>
<th>Negative Tests for COVID-19</th>
<th>Other Diagnosis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Trinidad &amp; Tobago</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jamaica</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St. Lucia</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Influenza A H1N1 pdm09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BVI</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bermuda</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Influenza B Victoria (no deletions)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St. Vincent and The Grenadines</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>Influenza B Victoria (no deletions) x 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Please pay attention to changes in sampling requirements and reminders for accessing our service.

**SPECIMEN COLLECTION REQUIREMENTS UPDATE:**

**Specimens:** Nasopharyngeal or oropharyngeal swabs (Dacron or polyester flocked) in Viral Transport Media, collected ≤ 5 days from Date of Onset (DOO) of symptoms.

Effective 2nd March 2020, urine and serum samples will be rejected. Urine and/or serum samples are no longer required for laboratory diagnosis of SARS-CoV-2.

**Biosafety considerations:** A trained healthcare worker wearing appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) (N95 mask, gloves, fluid resistant gown) should take the primary samples from the suspect case/patient.

**Storage (until testing):** ≤5 days: 4 °C, >5 days: -70 °C or -20 °C if -70 °C is not available. Avoid repeated freezing/thawing cycles.

**COMMUNICATION REMINDER:**

**Notification:** Before submitting a sample for testing to CMML there must be confirmation to proceed from the Member State’s Chief Medical Officer, National Laboratory Director, the National IHR Focal Point and CMML Head, Laboratory Services and Networks.

Please contact us at escobaga@carpha.org or +1 868 3246809

**Shipment:** Once confirmation is received, please send an email containing all shipment documentation and the accompanying laboratory investigation form/s to customerservice@carpha.org.

**Reports:** All laboratory results will be issued via the online system, Senait. All first positive cases will be reported verbally directly to the Chief Medical Officer and the National Laboratory Director.

Please visit our dedicated web page for the most recent updates at http://carpha.org/What-We-Do/Public-Health/Novel-Coronavirus

Yours Sincerely,

Dr. Joy St. John
Executive Director

cc: Dr. Gabriel González-Escobar, Head, Laboratory Services and Networks (LSN)
    Dr. Lisa Indar, Assistant Director, Surveillance, Disease Prevention & Control Division