Chief Medical Officers  
Laboratory Directors  
National Epidemiologists

Dear CMOs, Laboratory Directors and National Epidemiologists,

LABORATORY UPDATE 3: COVID-19 (SARS-CoV-2)

This is an update to the COVID-19 Laboratory Update 2 circulated on 27th February 2020.

Following the confirmation of positive cases of SARS-CoV-2 (COVID-19) in six CARPHA Member States (CMS) over the last forty-eight (48) hours, and likelihood of increased samples for testing and notification of possible disruptions in the supply chain of critical reagents required for laboratory detection, the CARPHA Medical Microbiology Laboratory (CMML) has made temporary changes to its test services.

With effect from Monday, 16th March 2020 –

1. The following laboratory tests will be suspended until further notice:

   - Molecular detection of all Non-influenza viruses: Adenovirus, Human Metapneumovirus (HMPV), Para Influenza 1 – 3, Rhinovirus and Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV)

   - Serological tests (IgM ELISA) of Arboviruses: Dengue, Chikungunya and Zika viruses as PCR will continue for those cases matching the case definitions.

2. Each CMS will be allowed a maximum of twenty (20) samples per week for the detection of the SARS-CoV-2 virus (COVID-19). Please ensure compliance with the instructions for prior notification before sending samples for testing.

3. Severe Acute Respiratory Infection (SARI) samples can be sent as imported cases have begun in CMS

   This is necessary to maintain our capacity to best respond to all our Member States during this outbreak period.

REMINDEERS:

Specimen Requirements: Nasopharyngeal or oropharyngeal swabs (Dacron or polyester flocked) in Viral or Universal Transport Media, collected up to 5 days from Date of Onset (DOO) of symptoms.
**Notification of shipment:** Before submitting a sample please send an email containing all shipment documentation and the accompanying laboratory investigation form/s to customerservice@carpha.org. For further guidance please contact us at escobaga@carpha.org or +1 868 324-0869

**Turnaround Time:** 24 – 48 hours after receipt of samples by CMML

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

Yours Sincerely,

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