CARPHA/SDPC/LSN/018/20

20th March 2020

Chief Medical Officers
Laboratory Directors
National Epidemiologists

Dear CMOs, Laboratory Directors and National Epidemiologists,

LABORATORY UPDATE 5: COVID-19 (SARS-CoV-2)

This is an update to the COVID-19 Laboratory Update 4 circulated on 19th March 2020.

Please be advised that beginning Monday March 23, 2020, the molecular detection of Influenza A and B viruses will only be offered if specifically requested on the CARPHA laboratory request form.

The CARPHA Medical Microbiology Laboratory (CMML) has made this temporary change to its test service for the following reasons –

I. We are rapidly approaching the end of the current influenza season

II. There is an observed decrease in the number of positive cases for influenza virus in CARPHA Member States

III. This has become necessary for efficient use of available resources as CARPHA responds to the COVID-19 pandemic

REMINDE R S FOR COVID-19:

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.

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](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 (SDPC)