CARPHA/SDPC/LSN/023/20

Chief Medical Officers
Laboratory Directors
National Epidemiologists

Dear CMOs, Laboratory Directors and National Epidemiologists,

LABORATORY UPDATE 6: COVID-19 (SARS-CoV-2)

This is an update to the COVID-19 Laboratory Update 5 circulated on 20th March 2020.

The CARPHA Medical Microbiology Laboratory (CMML) wishes to inform our stakeholders of ongoing activities in support of all our Member States during the regional response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Turnaround Time (TAT) for COVID-19: 16 hours, 49 min
This is average TAT for specimens received from Member States who continue to access our service for the detection of SARS-CoV-2. This TAT is applicable for the period February 10 – March 26, 2020 during which 693 samples were processed.

Guidance on COVID-19 Considerations for Medical/Hospital Laboratories:
CARPHA through the Caribbean Public Health Laboratory Network (CariPHLN), launched a virtual training package aimed at providing all medical and hospital laboratories with current information on newly available diagnostic platforms for detection of SARS-CoV-2; applicable laboratory biosafety and biosecurity guidance for handling and processing various types of patient samples that are suspect or confirmed cases of COVID-19 and an opportunity to learn from others in the Network that already have capacity for the detection of SARS-CoV-2.

The first session was conducted yesterday, March 26, 2020 with National Laboratory Directors as the primary audience while another session was held today, March 27, 2020 for all medical/hospital laboratory directors and managers.

Member States are encouraged to request access to this virtual session for their local laboratory networks by sending a request to LMT@carpha.org

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 (SDPC)