



PHILIPPINE COLLEGE OF OCCUPATIONAL MEDICINE, INC.

*Specialty Society of the Philippine Medical Association
Under the Division of the Philippine Academy of Family Physicians,
Affiliate Member of International Commission on Occupational Health (ICOH) and
Asian Association of Occupational Health (AAOH)*

Accredited by:

*Philippine Health Insurance Corporation, Department of Labor and Employment, and
Professional Regulation Commission as CPD Provider*

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May 19, 2020

Health and Safety of Workers and Impact to Employers:

On behalf of the Philippine College of Occupational Medicine, Inc., I EXTEND TO EVERYONE LISTENING Greetings of Health and Safety!

We IN THE COLLEGE works with management and workers as a team to safeguard, promote, maintain, and enhance workers health, wellness, and safety. We take responsibility for the care and welfare of the community and in conserving the environment for future generations.

As Occupational Health Physicians, it is our duty together with the Health and Safety Committee to prevent any work related illnesses or injuries that may happen in the workplace, and promote Occupational Health Services and Occupational Health and Safety Programs in every Workplaces. As Stated in the Occupational Safety Health standard of the Philippines Rule 1960 "Occupational Health Services" we are tasked to assess the worker's physical, emotional, and psychological state as well as his other existing conditions in order to facilitate proper placement and ensure suitability of individuals according to their physical capabilities, mental abilities and emotional make up for work which they can perform with acceptable degree of efficiency without endangering their own health and safety and that that of their co-workers. We act as consultants and advisers to Employers when it comes to safety and health.

With RA 11058, OSH Law and its IRR DO 198-18 "AN ACT STRENGTHENING COMPLIANCE OF OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY AND HEALTH STANDARDS AND PROVIDING PENALTIES FOR VIOLATIONS THEREOF" We are mandated by law to maintain a safe and healthy workforce who are integral aspects of Nation Building and ensure a safe and healthful workplace for all working people, by affording them full protection against all hazards in their work environment.

The impact of this Pandemic to Employers is very alarming. Companies that are trying to recover from economic devastation are forced to suffer further by paying for costly and potentially misleading tests. This Rapid test kits has its advantages, disadvantages, and limitations. These tests do not detect the virus, just the antibodies produced against the virus thus it is not recommended as a screening tool for early infection let alone used to screen workers prior to return to work in the workplace.

We support the statement made by the WHO, PMA, PSMID, PCP, PAFP, PSPHP, PSGIM, Covid 19 Action Network, and other stakeholders on their stand in the proper use of rapid anti body test for clinical or public health purpose.

Thank You.

PHIL M. PANGILINAN, MD, MHA, FPSMS, DPCOM, PAFP
National President



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May 20, 2020

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Position Statement on Rapid Test Kits

The Philippine College of Occupational Medicine recognizes the urgent need to look into timely and accurate testing as an essential part in slowing down the pandemic and hopefully will be able to detect asymptomatic cases that could hinder the further spread of the virus.

To date, these IgG/IgM tests aka rapid test kits has its advantages, disadvantages and limitations. It is dependent on the detection of antibodies made by the patient in response to SARS-COV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19 disease. These tests do not detect the virus and thus it is not recommended as screening tool for early infection let alone used to screen workers prior to the return to work in the workplace.


These antibody tests may have a place in detecting unrecognized past infection and immunity however that role needs to be rigorously evaluated. PCOM acknowledges that further review and assessment following closely the advice of leading international and local institutes, tests which have been validated through proper quality control before deciding if at all they have a place in our overall approach to managing COVID -19 at the workplace.

However, we also acknowledge the DOH DM 2020-0220 interim guidelines on return to work issued last May 11, 2020 stating the "option" of " using the FDA approved rapid antibody tests among representative samples for baseline can also be conducted up to every 14 days. And the Rapid Antibody based test is only an adjunct test and shall not be used as a standalone test to definitely diagnose or rule out COVID-19" (ref: DOH DM 2020-0180 revised interim guidelines on expanded testing for COVID19, April 17 2020)

That being said the use of these test kits as a mandatory protocol for companies before returning back to work is not advocated. The DOLE DTI interim guidelines also states that employers "may test" workers for COVID 19 in conformity with the DOH protocols.

We support the statements made by the WHO, Philippine Medical Association, Philippine College of Physicians, Philippine Society of Microbiology and Infectious Diseases, Philippine Society of General Internal Medicine, Philippine Academy of Family Physicians, Philippine Society of Public Health Physicians, and COVID-19 Action Network on their stand in the use of rapid antibody tests for clinical or public health purposes. These tests have yet to be thoroughly evaluated backed up with evidence based medicine.


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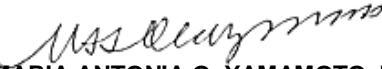
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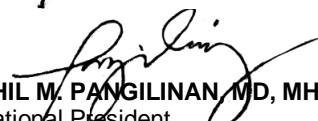
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