

5 July 2020

Dear Colleague

COVID-19 TESTING

As we are now experiencing the surge of the COVID-19 pandemic, we unfortunately have to implement certain measures to ensure that we are able to use our available capacity for testing in the most optimal way, to achieve the maximum positive impact for the clinical care of those patients most in need and at risk. We will therefore implement the following protocol at all our laboratories and depots with immediate effect, from Monday, 6 July 2020.

The following categories of patients, and in decreasing order of priority, will only be tested on referral by a health care professional:

- 1) Hospital in-patients, i.e. those admitted for COVID-19 related symptoms, or any other emergency surgical or medical cases;
- 2) Health care workers;
- 3) Patients older than 55 years with COVID-19 related symptoms;
- 4) Patients younger than 55 years with COVID-19 symptoms and suffering from any of the following comorbidities:
 - a. diabetes,
 - b. hypertension or heart disease,
 - c. cancer,
 - d. immune-compromised patients, like HIV with poor compliance to ARV, active Tuberculosis, etc
 - e. chronic lung disease on treatment i.e. asthma or chronic obstructive airway disease;
- 5) Pre-admission of non-emergency surgical or medical cases

Unfortunately, until further notice, we are not able to offer COVID-19 testing to the following patients:

- 1) Asymptomatic out-patients. This include patients exposed to positive cases, including those older than 55 years or suffering from comorbidities, but without any symptoms;
- 2) Re-testing of COVID-19 positive patients after completion of the prescribed period of self-isolation;
- 3) Screening for the purpose of returning to work, for non-essential services;
- 4) Workplace mass screening;
- 5) Self-referred patients.

We request that, as far as possible, you do not refer symptomatic patients under the age of 55 without co-morbidities for testing in order to preserve testing capacity for vulnerable patients.

We will keep you informed of changes to our capacity and ability to extend the testing again.

Yours,

John Douglass

Please refer to our website to obtain a list of our Pathologists