



PHILHEALTH CIRCULAR
No. 2020-0010

TO : ALL ACCREDITED HEALTH CARE PROVIDERS,
 ACCREDITED SARS-CoV-2 TESTING LABORATORIES
 AND ALL OTHERS CONCERNED

SUBJECT : Benefit package for testing for SARS-CoV-2

I. BACKGROUND/RATIONALE

On March 11, 2020, the World Health Organization (WHO) declared a global pandemic of the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19). Subsequently Presidential Proclamation No. 929 s. 2020 was issued declaring a State of Calamity throughout the Philippines due to the increasing number of individuals infected with the virus. The entire Luzon was also placed under Enhanced Community Quarantine (ECQ) on March 16, 2020 to prevent virus transmission.

The response of the national government to this global pandemic was the legislation of Republic Act No. 11469 or the Bayanihan to Heal as One Act. This law envisioned a coordinated whole-of-government and whole-of-society approach to eradicate COVID-19. Under the Universal Health Care Act (RA 11223), PhilHealth shall ensure equitable access to quality, affordable and accessible health care services by all Filipinos. By providing coverage for diagnostic tests, PhilHealth, through PhilHealth Board Resolution No. 2516 s. 2020, shall cover the medical expenses for testing of SARS-CoV-2.

II. OBJECTIVE

This circular aims to establish the policy for the implementation of the benefit package for the testing for SARS-CoV-2.

III. SCOPE

This circular shall apply to all Filipinos tested for SARS-CoV-2, to the Research Institute for Tropical Medicine-Department of Health (RITM-DOH), and to all testing laboratories that are certified by RITM-DOH.

IV. MINIMUM STANDARDS

- A. All RITM-DOH certified testing laboratories for SARS-CoV-2 that have the capacity to adhere to the following established standards and accepted protocols shall be accredited by PhilHealth to provide the following services:
1. Conduct of real time - polymerase chain reaction (RT-PCR) testing
 2. Analysis and reporting of results

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B. Testing laboratories shall submit their official certification from the RITM-DOH to become accredited by PhilHealth for this benefit package.

V. BENEFIT AVAILMENT

A. All Filipinos who are classified as eligible for testing based on DOH guidelines, as well as all COVID-19 cases that require repeated testing can avail of the benefit package. Filipinos who are not registered in PhilHealth shall be automatically covered, provided that they complete member registration upon availment of the benefit package;

B. The single period of confinement and 45 days annual benefit limit shall not be applied in this benefit package;

C. Accredited testing laboratories are required to have an electronic health record of all patients who underwent the SARS-CoV-2 testing. If this is not available, a manual record of patients who underwent the SARS-CoV 2 testing shall be acceptable during the state of emergency;

D. The services included in this benefit package are the following :

1. Screening/clinical assessment
2. Diagnostic workup, as indicated
3. Specimen collection
4. Specimen transport
5. Conduct of RT-PCR testing (including the test kit)
6. Analysis and reporting of results

E. The case-based payment of the benefits for testing for SARS-CoV-2 that shall be available for any Filipino patient are indicated in Table 1. The testing laboratory accredited by PhilHealth and listed in the accreditation database may claim one of the following packages:

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Table 1. Packages for SARS-CoV-2 testing

Package Code	Description*	Package Amount (Php)
C19T1	All services for the testing are procured and provided by the testing laboratory	8,150
C19T2	Test kits are donated to the testing laboratory	5,450
C19T3	Test kits are donated to the testing laboratory; cost of running the laboratory and the RT-PCR machine for testing is included in the facility budget	2,710

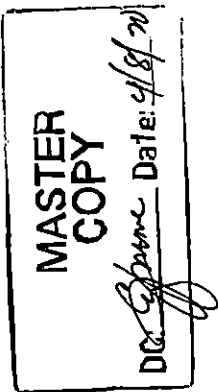
*Requires tagging in the integrated PhilHealth accreditation system (iPAS)



- F. PhilHealth shall pay the package amount for all services rendered by the SARS-CoV-2 testing laboratories;
1. The accredited testing laboratory shall establish or develop internal guidelines and process regarding transfer of corresponding payments to referring facilities for payment of screening, collection and transport of specimens.
 2. The accredited testing laboratories shall establish referral agreement with the referring facility for the following services
 - a) Screening / clinical assessment
 - b) Diagnostic work-up
 - c) Specimen collection
 - d) Specimen transport
- G. Patients shall not be charged co-payment for services received for the test for SARS-CoV-2;
- H. The benefit package shall be updated as needed to reflect current protocols and standards in collaboration with relevant institutions, experts, and stakeholders.

VI. CLAIMS FILING AND REIMBURSEMENT

- A. Claims applications for this benefit package for SARS-CoV-2 testing shall be filed separately from other COVID-19 claims;
- B. While claims submission is not yet fully automated, manual filing of claims shall be acceptable;
- C. There shall be **no** direct filing of claims for SARS-CoV-2 testing by members except for tests conducted during the period of 1 February 2020 to 14 April 2020;
- D. Requirements for claims applications include the following documents:
 1. Properly accomplished Claim Form 2 (CF2)
 2. Certified true copy of Case Investigation Form (CIF) that is prescribed by the DOH
 3. Official receipts are required for directly filed claims for tests conducted during the period of 1 February 2020 to 14 April 2020.
- E. Claims for multiple testing of samples of a patient may be filed in one Claim Form 2;
- F. All claims for the testing for SARS-CoV-2 must be filed within 60 calendar days from receipt of the specimen by the testing laboratory. Rules on late filing shall apply;

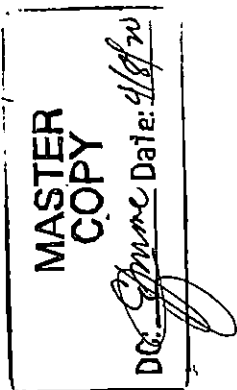


If the delay in the filing of claims is due to natural calamities or other fortuitous events, 120 calendar days shall be accorded as stipulated in Item V, Section G.1 of PhilHealth Circular No. 2020-0007;

- G. All claims applications shall have complete attachments as required in the policy;
- H. Claims applications shall be processed by PhilHealth within the prescribed filing period provided that all requirements are complied with.
 - 1. Claims for SARS-CoV-2 Testing package shall be filed with special tagging in the accreditation system for this purpose;
 - 2. All claims for SARS-CoV-2 testing shall be paid directly to the accredited SARS-CoV-2 testing laboratory except for claims that were directly filed to PhilHealth by members;
 - 3. All mandatory deductions as provided by law, such as, but not limited to senior citizen discounts, PWD discounts, etc. shall be deducted first from the total hospital bill of the patient. All other health benefits such as, but not limited to, health maintenance organizations (HMOs), private health insurance (PHIs), and employee discounts shall complement the benefit packages of PhilHealth as stipulated in this circular. All the above deductions and benefits shall be reflected in the itemized billing statement of the patients;
 - 4. Claims with incomplete requirements, discrepancy/ies shall be returned to sender (RTS) for compliance within 60 calendar days from receipt of notice.

VII. MONITORING

- A. All accredited SARS-CoV-2 testing laboratories claiming for this benefit package shall be subject to the rules on monitoring set by PhilHealth. For tagging the iPAS, PhilHealth shall secure from the DOH the distribution list of all testing laboratories with donated test kits as well as those laboratories with operation costs funded by the government to run the RT-PCR test;
- B. Copies of referral agreements shall be maintained by the testing laboratories and such documents shall be made available to PhilHealth authorized personnel at all times;
- C. Feedback mechanisms shall be established to monitor implementation issues and concerns;
- D. PhilHealth shall coordinate with DOH for data sharing on the list of patients availing of the SARS-CoV-2 Testing. PhilHealth should eventually develop its own registry for facilities accredited by PhilHealth for SARS-CoV-2 testing.



VIII. EFFECTIVITY

This Circular shall take effect immediately with retroactive coverage for all qualified SARS-CoV-2 tests conducted in RITM, RITM-DOH certified and accredited laboratories starting 1 February 2020. This shall be published in a newspaper of general circulation and shall be deposited with the National Administrative Register, University of the Philippines Law Center.


BGEN RICARDO C. MORALES, AFP (RET) FICD
President and Chief Executive Officer

Date: 4/8/22

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D.O. [Signature] Date: 4/8/22

