

OUR RESPONSE TO COVID-19**AGHAM AT KAALAMAN PARA SA BAYAN!****OFFICERS**

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PAASE BULLETIN # 9**ON PAASE STRATEGIC ACTION GROUP 3: MASS TESTING & RAPID-TRACKING**

Addressed to: DOH Key Decision-Makers, Senators, Congressmen, Executive and Legislative Branches of the Philippine Government

RAPID ANTIBODY TEST FOR DEVELOPING COVID19 TREATMENT

PAASE supports the use of a standardized rapid antibody test for use in the strategic containment of, and development of treatment protocols for, covid19.

This position is based on the following facts:

- (1) The antibody test identifies individuals who have been exposed to the covid19 virus regardless of when the exposure occurred (1). Furthermore, depending on the type of antibody detected, one can estimate the stage of a person's infection. This is in contrast to PCR-based tests for detecting covid19, which only positively identify individuals who are harbouring the covid19 virus at the time of testing.
- (2) The test is rapid (results in 3-15 minutes) and can be done in any hospital and doctor's clinic without the need of specialised equipment (2). These features make the test suitable for mass screening for patients and complement the current PCR-based tests which take time and of which the Philippines has limited supply.
- (3) It is important to identify all individuals who have been exposed to the covid19 virus for the following reasons:
 - a. The antibody test is able to identify individuals who have been exposed to the covid19 virus but remain asymptomatic or have otherwise recovered. These individuals may be invited to donate their blood, as their blood may be used for covid19 treatment, given that it contains antibodies that can neutralize the covid19 virus (3).
 - b. Presence of antibodies, lack of symptoms and being virus-free indicate the person has developed immunity (1). This can be used as an indicator to determine herd immunity and indication of whether the virus is under control. (4)
 - c. Data regarding total number of infected individuals are necessary to calculate accurate infection, recovery and mortality rates. (5)
- (4) The antibody test does not replace the RT-PCR method for determining whether a person is virus-free.

References:

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