

COVID-19 Updates

Testing capacity ramped up, reaches 3 lakh tests/day

Posted On: 16 JUN 2020 1:11PM by PIB Delhi

Ministry of Health & Family Welfare has asked States/UTs to proactively engage with the private healthcare providers to facilitate enhanced bed availability and critical care health facilities and to ensure fair and transparent charges for services provided.

In this regard, some States like Tamil Nadu, Odisha, Maharashtra, Gujarat, Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, Telangana, Karnataka and Madhya Pradesh have already taken the initiative. They have negotiated and reached an agreement with the private sector on reasonable rates and arrangements to provide critical care for in-patient COVID-19 admissions. States have also been asked to proactively engage with the private sector health providers and consider pooling in public and private healthcare facilities, as this will help in providing prompt, good quality and reasonable health care to COVID-19 patients.

The testing capacity for detecting the novel Coronavirus in infected persons in the country is continuously being ramped up. The country now has the capacity to test 3 lakh samples per day. The total number of samples tested thus far is 59,21,069 with 1,54,935 samples tested in the last 24 hours.

A network of 907 labs has been created in the country as on date. This includes 659 labs in the government sector and 248 in the private sector. The details are as follows:

- Real-Time RT PCR based testing labs: 534 (Govt: 347 + Private: 187)
- TrueNat based testing labs : 302 (Govt: 287 + Private: 15)
- CBNAAT based testing labs : 71 (Govt: 25 + Private: 46)

In order to enhance the testing capacity in Delhi, each of the 11 districts shall now have assigned labs for exclusively testing the samples from the respective districts. The samples from each district are being sent to these labs to ensure timely testing and getting the results without any delay. Currently there are 42 labs in Delhi with per day testing capacity of approx. 17000.

The Real Time PCR (RT-PCR) is the gold standard frontline test for diagnosis of COVID-19 and with 907 labs across the country, they can be used for strengthened testing capacity. However, these tests require specialised laboratory facilities and take at least 2-5 hours including the time and effort to transport the sample to these high-end labs. The TRUENAT and CB NAAT being portable can be and are being used in remote areas.

In its endeavour to make testing more affordable and increase the volume of testing without losing on reliability, sensitivity and specificity, ICMR has issued an advisory on point-of-care **Rapid Antigen Detection Test** which can be accessed at:

https://www.icmr.gov.in/pdf/covid/strategy/Advisory_for_rapid_antigen_test_14062020_.pdf

The Rapid Antigen test may be used in containment zones and hospital settings under strict medical supervision. The Standard Q COVID-19 Ag detection kit takes 15 minutes to show results and therefore will help in early detection of the disease. The antigen test can be conducted at the site of sample collection in the healthcare setting within one hour of sample collection. Domestic manufacturing capacity of antigen test kits in the country currently is around 10 million in a month. In order to facilitate States to easily procure the Rapid Antigen test kits, the Centre is ensuring that the domestic manufactures are onboarded to the Government E-Marketplace (GEM) portal.

ELISA AND CLIA antibody tests can be used for asymptomatic frontline workers, doctors, paramedics etc., and for those working in COVID-19 care to boost their confidence. These are also being made available on GEM portal.

For all authentic & updated information on COVID-19 related technical issues, guidelines & advisories please regularly visit: <https://www.mohfw.gov.in/> and @MoHFW_INDIA .

Technical queries related to COVID-19 may be sent to technicalquery.covid19@gov.in and other queries on ncov2019@gov.in and @CovidIndiaSeva.

In case of any queries on COVID-19, please call at the Ministry of Health & Family Welfare helpline no.: +91-11-23978046 or 1075 (Toll-free). List of helpline numbers of States/UTs on COVID-19 is also available at

<https://www.mohfw.gov.in/pdf/coronavirushelplinenumber.pdf> .

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(Release ID: 1631869)