



Republic of the Philippines
Department of Health
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

MORE COVID TEST KITS ARRIVING, 5 SUB-NATIONAL LABS NOW OPERATIONAL
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In line with its strategy to #BeatCovid19, DOH is accelerating its COVID-19 testing capacity.

In addition to the current 1,300 available kits and recently delivered kits (2,050) from China and South Korea, DOH is anticipating additional 120,500 units from different countries, such as China, Korea, and Brunei.

DOH also announced that five (5) sub-national laboratories are now operating alongside the Research Institute for Tropical Medicine. These are San Lazaro Hospital, and Baguio General Hospital & Medical Center for Luzon, Vicente Sotto Memorial Medical Center for Visayas, and Southern Philippines Medical Center for Mindanao. These laboratories are able to process between 50-300 tests daily.

Two additional laboratories are being set-up. Western Visayas Medical Center and Bicol Public Health Laboratory will undergo proficiency testing for one week before it can begin testing.

The University of the Philippines-National Institutes of Health as an extension lab has also been mobilized and is currently testing overflow samples from the Research Institute for Tropical Medicine.

“We must underscore the importance of laboratory certification due to the hazards of handling a live virus. The Department is exercising utmost care in certifying more sub-national laboratories and ensuring that biosafety measures are in place,” Health Secretary Francisco T. Duque III emphasized.

Further, the DOH will be assisted by World Health Organization and the Research Institute for Tropical Medicine, to assess five (5) more molecular biology laboratories in private tertiary hospitals as possible extension labs starting March 21. These are St. Lukes Medical Center - Global City, Makati Medical Center, The Medical City, St. Lukes Medical Center - Quezon City, and Chinese General Hospital. More laboratories will be assessed across all regions after this first round is completed.

The DOH is also exploring the possibility of linking lower-level laboratories to those with virus inactivation capacity. “For example, virus inactivation can be done in the more sophisticated laboratories and samples can then be processed in lower-level laboratories. This will achieve the twin goals of increasing testing output per day and ensuring the safety of our health workers,” explained the Health Chief.