



September 2, 2020

COVID-19 ADVISORY NO. 27

**SUBJECT: Inclusion of Hemodialysis Patients and all Vulnerable Sectors
Identified in Subgroup F of DM No. 2020-0258-A for
RT-PCR Testing.**

The Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic caused by severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2) has prompted widespread restrictions on ambulatory in-patient healthcare encounters. National Inter-Agency Task Force Management of Emerging Infectious Diseases Omnibus Guidelines on the Implementation of Community Quarantine in the Philippines have identified Authorized Person Outside Residence (APORS) which include those working in public and private hospitals, health, emergency and frontline services, including those in dialysis centers, chemotherapy centers and the like. However, patients with kidney failure who received maintenance hemodialysis must continue to receive life-sustaining treatment, typically three (3) times per week. Concerns regarding viral acquisition are heightened by the fact that hemodialysis patients have multiple risk factors for severe COVID-19.

Current data reveals Twenty Two (22) on dialysis who were confirmed positive for COVID-19 while Eleven (11) of deaths had history of Chronic Kidney Disease aside from other comorbidity. Thirteen (13) of Healthcare Workers for Dialysis Center were reported positive for COVID-19.

It is in this regard that the Department of Health issued the Department Memorandum No. 2020-0258 and 2020-0258-A entitled "Updated Interim Guidelines on Expanded Testing for COVID-19". This issuance covers all individuals who are at-risk of contracting the disease, including "other vulnerable patients and those living in confined spaces under subgroup F".

As agreed between hemodialysis facilities in the region, RT-PCR test shall be a pre-condition request for hemodialysis patients especially for those symptomatic hemodialysis patients. In connection to this, the office is directing all Local Government Units (LGUs) to adopt the above-mentioned memorandum and provide priority schedule for swabbing of hemodialysis patients and their identified permanent care taker and those vulnerable sector under Subgroup F such as:

1. Pregnant patients who shall be tested during the peripartum period;
2. Dialysis patients;
3. Patients who are immunocompromised, such as those who have HIV/AIDS, inherited diseases that affect the immune system;
4. Patients undergoing chemotherapy or radiography;



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5. Patients who will undergo elective surgical procedures with high risk for transmission;
6. Any person who have had organ transplants, or have had bone marrow or stem cell transplant in the past 6 months;
7. Any person who is about to be admitted in enclosed institutions such as jails, penitentiaries, and mental institutions.

Individuals falling under (1) to (6) above shall be tested at the discretion of the attending physician, following the existing guidelines of their respective professional or medical societies. Meanwhile, testing of individuals classified as (7) above is mandatory prior to admission into the facility.

For your guidance and strict compliance


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Director IV 