CHIEF HEALTH OFFICER APPROVAL TO REQUEST COVID-19 TESTING ON PATIENTS UNDERGOING SPECIFIC AERODIGESTIVE PROCEDURES

The World Health Organization declared COVID-19 a pandemic on 11 March 2020. On 23 March 2020, the Minister for Health declared a public health state of emergency with effect from 1.30 p.m. on 23 March 2020 in respect of COVID-19 pursuant to section 167 of the Public Health Act 2016 (WA) (Act). The public health state of emergency applies to the State of Western Australia.

On the 21 April pursuant to section 174(2) of the Act, the COVID-19 TESTING DIRECTIONS ("Directions") were issued, setting out when a person falls within the testing requirements before a test can be requested in relation to COVID-19, as well as who is permitted to carry out that sort of test.

Pursuant to those Directions, as Chief Health Officer, I may give approval in writing to a medical practitioner or other person (or a class of medical practitioners, or of other persons, or of medical practitioners and other persons) to make a request, or to make requests, that a test be conducted, whether given unconditionally or subject to terms or conditions.

I HEREBY GIVE APPROVAL to medical practitioners to request a COVID-19 test in respect of patients about to undergo any surgical procedure involving:
(a) the upper and lower airway, oral cavity or upper digestive tract where aerosolisation of tissue is expected; or
(b) Category 1 cancers involving mucosal surfaces of the upper airway or aerodigestive tract.

Testing is to occur in accordance with any terms and conditions contained in this approval. Otherwise, the existing testing requirements at this time apply, namely that a test should only be requested if a patient has any one or more of; a fever of at least 38 degrees; OR, a recent history of fever; OR acute respiratory symptoms.

Dr Andrew Robertson
CHIEF HEALTH OFFICER
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF HEALTH OFFICER

24 April 2020