CHIEF HEALTH OFFICER APPROVAL TO CONDUCT COVID-19 PCR TESTING AT POINT OF CARE IN REMOTE CLINICS

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 conduct a test, whether given unconditionally or subject to terms or conditions.

I HEREBY GIVE APPROVAL under the Directions to medical practitioners, registered nurses, Aboriginal health workers/practitioners or other persons providing health services at a Western Australian clinic approved and registered under the "Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander COVID-19 POC Testing Program Guidelines" as published by the Kirby Institute UNSW Sydney and Flinders University International Centre for Point-of-Care Testing, as amended from time to time ("ATSI COVID-19 Guidelines") to conduct COVID-19 testing, as an approved tester, subject to the following terms and conditions:

(a) any test to be conducted has been requested in accordance with the Directions;

(b) the approved tester is satisfied that the clinic is currently registered under the ATSI COVID-19 Guidelines;

(c) tests must only be conducted on nasopharyngeal swab specimens using polymerase chain reaction (PCR) Xpert Xpress SARS-CoV-2 laboratory / point of care test, approved by the Therapeutic Goods Administration for inclusion on the Australian Register of Therapeutic Goods;

(d) the approved tester must comply with all relevant requirements of the ATSI COVID-19 Guidelines;

(e) the tester must comply with the ATSI COVID-19 POC Testing Program’s quality management framework and includes compliance with the “Guidelines for Point of Care Testing” published by the National Pathology Accreditation Advisory Council, as amended from time to time ("NPAAC Guidelines");
(f) the approved tester must immediately upon request provide evidence to the Chief Health Officer of compliance with the ATSI COVID-19 POCT Guidelines to the satisfaction of the Chief Health Officer; and

(g) all test results are reported in accordance with the COVID Testing Reporting Directions dated 4 April 2020, made under the Public Health Act 2016 (WA).

Testing may only be conducted in accordance with the terms and conditions above. Otherwise, the existing requirements for the conduct of testing contained in the Directions apply.

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

13 May 2020