



PHILHEALTH CIRCULAR  
 No. 2021-0001

TO : ALL PHILHEALTH ACCREDITED SARS-CoV-2 TESTING LABORATORIES, PHILHEALTH MEMBERS AND ALL OTHERS CONCERNED

SUBJECT : Benefit Package for SARS-CoV-2 Testing Using RT-PCR (Revision 2)

**I. RATIONALE**

On March 11, 2020, the World Health Organization (WHO) declared a pandemic of the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19). Subsequently, Presidential Proclamation No. 929 s. 2020 was issued declaring a state of calamity throughout the Philippines due to the increasing number of individuals infected with the virus. The entire Luzon was also placed under Enhanced Community Quarantine (ECQ) on March 16, 2020 to prevent virus transmission.

The response of the national government to this pandemic was the legislation of Republic Act No. 11469 or the Bayanihan to Heal as One Act. This law envisioned a coordinated whole-of-government and whole-of-society approach to eradicate COVID-19. Under the Universal Health Care Act (RA 11223), PhilHealth shall ensure equitable access to quality, affordable and accessible health care services by all Filipinos.

PhilHealth continues to review the COVID-19 benefit packages including the cost estimates for the SARS-CoV-2 test benefit package. The review of the packages is based on the Department of Health (DOH) guidelines such as indications for testing and licensing requirements for operating a COVID-19 testing laboratory. PhilHealth also considered the increase in the number of COVID-19 testing laboratories licensed by the DOH and the number of reverse transcriptase - polymerase chain reaction (RT-PCR) based COVID-19 test kits approved by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA). Thus, PhilHealth, through PhilHealth Board Resolution No. 2525 s. 2020, shall implement the revised benefit package for SARS-CoV-2 test by RT-PCR.

**II. OBJECTIVE**

This *PhilHealth* Circular aims to establish the policy for the implementation of the benefit package for the SARS-CoV-2 test by RT-PCR.

**III. SCOPE**

This *PhilHealth* Circular shall apply to PhilHealth members tested for SARS-CoV-2 by RT-PCR as prescribed by the DOH and SARS-CoV-2 testing laboratories that are DOH licensed and accredited by PhilHealth.

MASTER COPY  
 DC: *off* Date: *01/28/2021*



PHILHEALTH  
*M/S*  
 MARITONI T. SALAZAR  
 AQ-IV, RELMS  
 Date: *5/27/2021*  
 CERTIFIED TRUE COPY

**IV. DEFINITION OF TERMS**

- A. *SARS-CoV-2* – refers to severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 that is responsible for coronavirus disease (COVID-19)<sup>1</sup>.
- B. *Reverse transcriptase polymerase chain reaction (RT – PCR)* – it is a test for detecting the presence of SARS-CoV-2 that is covered by the PhilHealth benefit package for COVID-19 testing.
- C. *File Transfer Protocol (FTP)* – a standard internet protocol for transmitting files between computers on the internet using control and data channels.

**V. POLICY STATEMENTS**

**A. MINIMUM STANDARDS FOR ACCREDITATION OF SARS-COV-2 TESTING LABORATORY**

- 1. The guidelines on the application for accreditation of SARS-CoV-2 testing laboratories are listed in Annex "A";
- 2. For stand-alone testing laboratories, PhilHealth shall accredit testing facilities that are licensed by the DOH and compliant to DOH guidelines;
- 3. For currently accredited health facilities that are DOH licensed as SARS-CoV-2 testing laboratories, PhilHealth shall automatically include the said service in their accreditation records with validity based on the DOH license issued to them.

**B. BENEFIT AVAILMENT**

- 1. PhilHealth members entitled to the benefit package for SARS-CoV-2 testing using RT-PCR shall be based on applicable DOH guidelines (See Annex B: "Sub-groups of at-risk individuals for SARS-CoV-2 testing") or its revisions/amendments in consideration of the evolving clinical management for COVID-19. PhilHealth shall disseminate the necessary update accordingly;
- 2. Filipinos who are not registered in PhilHealth shall automatically be covered, provided that they complete member registration upon availing of the benefit package. During the state of national emergency, the Case Investigation Form (CIF), as required in section V item C.4.b of this Circular, shall serve as the basis for the PhilHealth Identification Number (PIN) assignment, provided however, that the CIF should include the contact number for purposes of validation and verification. The requirement for PhilHealth Member Registration Form (PMRF) for registration and PIN assignment shall resume upon lifting of the state of national emergency;

MASTER COPY  
DC: *fff* Date: 01/28/2021

<sup>1</sup> [https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/technical-guidance/naming-the-coronavirus-disease-\(covid-2019\)-and-the-virus-that-causes-it](https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/technical-guidance/naming-the-coronavirus-disease-(covid-2019)-and-the-virus-that-causes-it)



PHILHEALTH  
*W/S*  
MARRONI T. SALAZAR  
AQ-IV BELMS  
Date: 5/27/2021  
CERTIFIED TRUE COPY

3. *With the enactment of the Universal Health Care (UHC) law, all Filipinos are eligible of all PhilHealth benefits. Thus, the single period of confinement and 45-day annual benefit limit shall not be applied in the benefit package for SARS-CoV-2 test using RT-PCR;*
4. PhilHealth accredited testing laboratories *covered by this Circular* are required to have an electronic health record of all patients who underwent the SARS-CoV-2 testing by RT-PCR. If this is not available, a manual record of patients who underwent the SARS-CoV-2 testing by RT-PCR shall be *accepted* during the state of national emergency;
5. The complete services or minimum standards included in this benefit package are the following:
  - a. Screening
  - b. Specimen collection
  - c. Specimen handling
  - d. Conduct of RT-PCR testing (including the test kit and other supplies)
  - e. Analysis and reporting of results
6. PhilHealth members eligible for coverage for SARS-CoV-2 testing, based on DOH *issuance* and their future revisions/amendments, shall not be charged co-payment for the minimum services included in this benefit package. *Patients may be charged co-payment for amenities, such as online appointment, drive-thru and home services for COVID-19 testing;*
7. The case-based payment of the benefit package for testing for SARS-CoV-2 by RT-PCR are *provided in table 1:*

**Table 1. Packages for SARS-CoV-2 testing by RT-PCR**

Package Code	Condition for payment	Services covered by PhilHealth	Package Amount (Php)
C19T1	All services and supplies for the testing are procured and provided by the testing laboratory	Complete services or minimum standards	3,409
C19T2	Test kits are donated to the testing laboratory	Screening, specimen collection and handling, conduct of RT-PCR testing and analysis of results	2,077
C19T3	Test kits are donated to the testing laboratory; cost of running the laboratory and the RT-PCR machine for testing are subsidized by the government	Screening, specimen collection and handling	901

MASTER COPY  
 DC:      Date: 01/28/2021

PHILHEALTH  
M/S  
 MARITONI T. SALAZAR  
 AO-IV, RELMS  
 Date 5/27/2021  
**CERTIFIED TRUE COPY**





PHILHEALTH  
 MARION T. SALAZAR  
 AD-IV, RELMS  
 Date: 5/27/2021  
 TRUE COPY

5. The accredited testing laboratory shall validate all electronic documents prior to submission to PhilHealth;
  6. The accredited testing laboratory shall validate all electronic documents prior to submission to PhilHealth;
  7. The accredited testing laboratory shall validate all electronic documents prior to submission to PhilHealth;
  8. PhilHealth shall pay the package amount for services for SARS-CoV-2 test by RT-PCR directly to the PhilHealth accredited testing laboratories;
  9. The package amount for SARS-CoV-2 testing using RT-PCR shall be applied for all specimens collected with dates beginning June 25, 2020 as specified in the prescribed "SARS-CoV-2 claims summary form and instructions for electronic submission" (Annex C). The date of specimen collection must be within the validity of the license of the accredited testing laboratory;
  10. The coverage for sub-groups of at-risk individuals shall be applied for all specimens collected beginning July 16, 2020 per DOH DM 2020-0258-A;
  11. The accredited testing laboratories shall be responsible for the reimbursement of the swabbing centers or referring facilities for the screening, specimen collection and handling;
  12. The benefit package shall be updated as needed to reflect current protocols and standards, and significant changes in market prices of supplies and commodities, among others, in collaboration with relevant institutions, experts, and stakeholders.
- The following are the rules for claims filing and reimbursement:
1. All accredited testing laboratories shall submit valid and accurate claims applications to PhilHealth;
  2. Subject to the requirements for claims filing, all claims for SARS-CoV-2 testing shall be filed by the PhilHealth accredited SARS-CoV-2 testing laboratories (hospital- and non-hospital based). Only services rendered within the validity period of the DOH license of the PhilHealth accredited SARS-CoV-2 testing laboratories can be reimbursed;
  3. All claims for SARS-CoV-2 testing using RT-PCR shall be submitted electronically as described in Annex "C";
  4. To file a claim for reimbursement, the accredited testing laboratories shall submit the following electronic documents to PhilHealth:
    - a. Properly accomplished SARS-CoV-2 Claims Summary Form (preferably in MS Excel format or CSV file);
    - b. Scanned copy of the properly accomplished CIF that is prescribed by the DOH (preferably in PDF format);
    - c. Itemized billing statement which includes the readers' fees, if any (preferably in MS Excel format or CSV file), for admitted patients only; and
    - d. Scanned copy of the Certificate of Classification of at-risk individuals and actual charges for SARS-CoV-2 test (Annex E) (preferably in PDF format), accomplished at point of specimen collection.
  5. The accredited testing laboratory shall validate all electronic documents prior to submission to PhilHealth;

MASTER COPY  
 Date: 01/28/2021  
 DC: gfp

**C. CLAIMS FILING AND REIMBURSEMENT**



PHILHEALTH  
 M/S  
 MARION T. SALAZAR  
 AD-IT, REAMS  
 Date: 5/27/2021  
 CENTER TRUE COPY

6. Subject to the requirements for claims filing, all claims shall be filed by the PhilHealth accredited SARS-CoV-2 testing laboratories. From 1 February 2020 to 14 April 2020, only services rendered within the validity period of the DOH license of the PhilHealth accredited SARS-CoV-2 testing laboratories can be reimbursed.
7. If the testing laboratory charged the PhilHealth member for the test, direct filing of claims is allowed. The amount to be reimbursed by PhilHealth shall not exceed the corresponding benefit for the SARS-CoV-2 test.
8. For directly filed claims, the following documents are required:
  - a. Original copy of the official receipt; and
  - b. Original, photocopy, or printed scanned copy of the "Waiver for directly filed claims for the SARS-CoV-2 testing package" (Annex D) issued by the PhilHealth accredited SARS-CoV-2 testing laboratory that the member paid the full amount for the SARS-CoV-2 testing and no PhilHealth deduction was made. The member shall bear the responsibility of keeping the said copy of the waiver for validation purposes during case investigation or dormitory monitoring.
  - c. Original, photocopy, or printed scanned copy of the CIF indicating the subgroup where the patient belongs.
9. The basis for the payment of claims shall be the package code for the specific SARS-CoV-2 testing package availed of, which shall be indicated in the SARS-CoV-2 Claims Summary Form and instructions for electronic submission (Annex C). All claims shall be subject to monitoring and post audit.
10. If patients incur charges for amenities such as online appointment, drive-thru and home services for COVID-19 testing, the PhilHealth accredited testing laboratory may charge co-payment for these. Thus, the PhilHealth benefit package for SARS-CoV-2 test should be deducted from the total actual charges.
11. Claims applications for this benefit package for SARS-CoV-2 testing by RT-PCR shall be filed separately from other COVID-19 claims for inpatient, isolation and cartridge-based PCR test. These include claims for tests done on patients admitted in PhilHealth accredited healthcare providers (HCP) that are licensed as SARS-CoV-2 testing laboratory.
12. All claims for the testing for SARS-CoV-2 by RT-PCR shall be filed within 60 calendar days from the date of specimen collection. If the delay in the filing of claims is due to natural calamities or other fortuitous events, 120 calendar days shall be accorded as stipulated in the applicable guidelines of PhilHealth.
13. PhilHealth shall reimburse for repeated tests as prescribed in the applicable DOH guidelines;

MASTER COPY  
 Date: 01/28/2021  
 DC: JFP

14. Dates of repeat tests shall be indicated in the SARS-CoV-2 "Claims Summary Form and instructions for electronic submission" (Annex C);
15. Rules on late filing shall apply;
16. Claims applications shall be processed by PhilHealth within the prescribed period for claims processing provided that all requirements are complied with.

**D. MONITORING**

1. All PhilHealth accredited SARS-CoV-2 testing laboratories claiming for this benefit package shall be subject to the rules on monitoring set by PhilHealth;
2. Feedback mechanisms on the package implementation shall be established to address implementation issues and concerns;
3. PhilHealth shall coordinate with the DOH for data sharing on the list of patients availing of the SARS-CoV-2 testing benefit package. PhilHealth shall develop its own claims registry/database of facilities accredited by PhilHealth for SARS-CoV-2 testing.

**E. LIST OF ANNEXES (Annexes shall be uploaded in the PhilHealth website)**

1. Annex A: Guidelines on the Application for Accreditation of SARS-CoV-2 Testing Laboratories
2. Annex B: Sub-groups of at-risk individuals for SARS-CoV-2 testing
3. Annex C: SARS-CoV-2 claims summary form and instructions for electronic submission
4. Annex D: Waiver for directly filed claims for SARS-CoV-2 testing benefit package
5. Annex E: Certificate of classification of at-risk individuals and actual charges for SARS-CoV-2 test

MASTER COPY  
 DC:      Date: 01/28/2021

**VI. PENALTY CLAUSE**

*All adverse monitoring findings regarding non-compliance to the relevant provisions of this policy such as, but not limited to co-payment, and other related issuance shall be validated and subject to provider performance assessment without prejudice to filing of appropriate legal action.*

**VII. TRANSITORY CLAUSE**

*All accredited SARS-CoV-2 testing laboratories shall be eClaims compliant by December 31, 2021. While the PhilHealth accredited SARS-CoV-2 testing laboratory is transitioning to eClaims, the facility may manually submit the required documents for claims reimbursement and shall upload the itemized billing through the file transfer protocol (FTP).*



**PHILHEALTH**  
MS  
**MARITONI T. SALAZAR**  
 AO-IV, RELMS  
 Date: 5/27/2021  
**CERTIFIED TRUE COPY**

VIII. REPEALING CLAUSE

This policy repeals *PhilHealth Circular No. 2020-0017 entitled "Benefit package for SARS-CoV-2 testing using RT-PCR (Revision 1)."*

IX. DATE OF EFFECTIVITY

This *PhilHealth Circular* shall take effect upon publication in a newspaper of general circulation. It shall thereafter be deposited with the *Office of the National Administrative Register, University of the Philippines Law Center.*



ATTY. DANTE A. GIERRAN, CPA  
President and Chief Executive Officer (PCEO)

Date: 1-26-2021

Benefit package for SARS-CoV-2 testing using RT-PCR (Revision 2)

MASTER COPY  
DC: off Date: 01/28/2021

PHILHEALTH  
MS  
MARITONI T. SALAZAR  
AO-IV RELMS  
Date: 5/27/2021  
CERTIFIED TRUE COPY

