

OUR RESPONSE TO COVID-19**AGHAM AT KAALAMAN PARA SA BAYAN!****OFFICERS**

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WEBSITEwww.paase.org**PAASE BULLETIN # 5****ON PAASE STRATEGIC ACTION GROUP 3: MASS TESTING & FAST-TRACKING****Addressed to: DOH, COVID-19 IATF, DFA, NEDA****CEPHEID KITS FOR COVID-19 TESTING TO RUN ON GENEXPERT MACHINES IN DOH TB DOTS TESTING CENTERS ALL OVER THE COUNTRY**

PAASE strongly supports the DOH in its efforts to import the Xpert® Xpress SARS-CoV-2 diagnostic kit ("Cepheid kit") for use in timely detection of COVID-19 in individuals.

This position is based on the following facts:

(1) The Cepheid kit has already been approved for commercial use by the Philippine Food and Drug Administration.

(2) The Cepheid kit is sensitive -- it is PCR-based.

(3) The Cepheid kit is fast – it takes less than an hour from sample preparation to obtaining the results.

(4) The Cepheid kit is easy to use. A biological sample from an individual is loaded directly into a self-contained cartridge, which is then inserted into a GeneXpert machine. The GeneXpert machine does the rest.

(5) The Cepheid kit would require minimal training, since its usage involves a small number of simple steps, and the DOH is familiar with Cepheid and its GeneXpert machine.

There are over 450 GeneXpert machines in use throughout the Philippines for diagnosis of tuberculosis under the DOH TB DOTS program.

(6) The Cepheid kit sells at USD20 each, although there is a movement to pressure Cepheid to lower the price to USD5. At USD20 a kit, it is comparable or less expensive than other kits.

Cepheid-GeneXpert testing could be a game-changer in COVID-19 testing, as the DOH attempts to embark on an accelerated national testing program.

References:

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