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## Private hospitals extend lab services for PCR testing

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Medical officers doing PCR Test - Pic by Shehan Gunasekara

• **Tests will be carried out on samples sent by Government only**

The Association of Private Hospitals and Nursing Homes (APHNH) in a statement to media, said they will extend all possible assistance to the national operations program for COVID-19 outbreak, in conducting the much needed PCR tests to help control the spread of COVID-19 in Sri Lanka. As such, the medical laboratories of Lanka Hospitals, Asiri Surgical, Nawaloka Hospital and Durdans, the only private healthcare facilities which have molecular diagnostics capability, will conduct the Polymerase Chain Reaction (PCR) tests essentially for the Government.

The private hospitals were requested to help the Government's effort in mass testing at an invitation to a high level discussion, chaired by Minister of Health and attended by Director General of Health Ministry and the Army Commander. This timely Public Private Partnership (PPP) arrangement will see samples from Government quarantine centres and other clusters, suspected of coronavirus-infected patients, sent to the private labs. For starters 100 tests will be conducted daily at each of these four labs, complying strictly with health ministry guidelines.

All PCR testing at any of these private hospitals' diagnostic labs, will be confined to samples sent by Government only and will help ramp up the pace of testing.

APHNH President Dr. Laksh Peiris said that his membership is fully compliant with and will go the extra mile in supporting the valiant efforts of the Ministry of Health and the National Centre for Prevention of COVID-19 Outbreak in helping to mitigate and contain the spread of infection.

"We, the private sector are happy to play a key role in easing the national burden of healthcare in this current pandemic," noted Dr. Peiris who added that ramped up testing will certainly help contain the outbreak.

He added that private hospitals are fully geared for patients that have other medical and healthcare needs too, such as surgeries, emergency care, etc., which could reduce the stress for the national hospitals which are engulged with treating pandemic patients," he added.

Dr. Peiris went on to say, "Private hospitals are working 24 x7 in ensuring the level of care that patients expect, while adhering to stringent quality and safety protocols guided by the Ministry of Health, epidemiology unit and WHO. We have shared all the protocol circulars sent to us by health authorities with the membership with a request to stringently adhere to all protocols diligently.

"Our emergency services plus other outpatient and inpatient clinical facilities will continue to provide the usual services, helping reduce the burden on the Government health sector, who's focus is centered around COVID-19."