

| | |
|--------------------------------|--------------------------|
| Publication: Daily News | Date: 06-Apr-20 |
| Page No: 1 | Section: Business |

Private Hospitals support, collaborate with govet. in battle against COVID-19



Members of the Association of Private Hospitals and Nursing Home

The Association of Private Hospitals and Nursing Homes (APHNH) in a statement to media said they are fully committed to and will continue to be a contributing force to the healthcare services in the country, in this critical time of the coronavirus pandemic.

To this effect, they have and will continue to diligently follow the government and health ministry directives in the fight against the spread, diagnosis and treatment. Health being an essential service, private hospitals are working full-on and round the clock, in ensuring the level of care

that patients expect. They reiterate that their emergency services plus other outpatient and inpatient clinical facilities will continue to provide the services as usual, thereby reducing the burden on the government health sector, which is now focussed on mobilizing facilities to take on COVID-19 infected patients.

The Association reiterates that they are supportive of and lend the efforts of the Government appointed Coronavirus Prevention Task Force and health ministry in these adverse and demanding times.

Following a Ministry of

Health directive on 13th March, private hospitals are not admitting patients suspected of or having symptoms of COVID-19. Some private hospitals have even transported suspect patients free of charge and are offering this service continuously.

To-date, COVID-19 PCR testing is not being carried out by any of the member hospitals of the Association as an OPD test as per the Ministry of Health instructions, the statement clarifies.

In a circular dated 18th March 2020, the ministry of health permitted certain private hospitals which are

equipped with molecular diagnostic testing facilities, to conduct COVID-19 PCR confirmatory tests on admitted patients, while adhering to stipulated conditions.

However, the Association is of the view that such a test should be done as an Out Patient (OP) service under stringent quality guidelines since the private hospitals are not permitted to admit Covid-19 suspected patients. Dr Laksh Peris, President of Association of Private Hospitals and Nursing Homes said "Our membership strongly recommends aggressive Covid-19 PCR testing to either reverse

the outbreak we expect in the future in Sri Lanka, or slow down and keep infected cases at a low level.

He said testing should be made a priority, taking learnings from other countries that ramped up testing capacity very early during the outbreak, and was able to contain the infection.

With over 150 private hospitals and nursing homes in the country, private healthcare has been playing a complimentary role to the public healthcare in Sri Lanka, particularly in bringing in newest technologies and outstanding clinical outcomes.