



(<https://codeblue.galencentre.org/2020/04/28/socso-paying-private-clinics-rm60-for-workers-antibody-testing-doctors/>)

Socso Paying Private Clinics RM60 For Workers' Covid-19 Testing: Doctors

By MP Durgahyeni

The PCR test is for workers from high-risk areas, whereas GP clinics will run rapid antibody tests in the second phase of the workers' screening.

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Malaysian Medical Association (MMA) secretary-general Dr R. Arasu in Kuala Lumpur on February 21, 2020. Picture by Vinodh Pillai.

KUALA LUMPUR, April 28 — The Social Security Organisation (Socso) will procure rapid antibody tests and pay general practitioner (GP) clinics RM60 to screen workers for Covid-19 with these, a doctors' group said.

Private GPs, who are panel clinics with the Socso (also known as Perkeso) Health Screening Programme (HSP), can register with the HSP portal (<https://sehat.perkeso.gov.my/v2/>) to join the Prihatin Screening Programme, whose costs will be borne by Socso.

The first phase of the workers' screening process involves a vendor appointed by Socso to run RT-PCR tests for workers from high-risk areas. An estimated 400,000 workers were approved to resume working during the third phase of the Movement Control Order (MCO) that ends today. The fourth phase of the partial lockdown starts from tomorrow until May 12.

CodeBlue understands that workers who have been screened with the gold-standard PCR tests — which identify genetic sequences belonging to the coronavirus — do not need to go through the antibody rapid test kits (RTK) in Phase 2 that will be conducted by GP clinics with a simple 10-minute pin-prick procedure.

Such serology, or antibody, tests need to be conducted twice within a week for each person tested, since they only check for antibodies developed days after a coronavirus infection as an immune response to the virus that causes Covid-19.

“The antibody RTK will be procured and distributed for free by Perkeso to the participating clinics which had consented to participate in this special programme. There will be two tests with an interval of one week,” Malaysian Medical Association (MMA) honorary general secretary Dr R. Arasu said in a circular to members about MMA’s April 24 meeting with Socso on Covid-19 testing. 3

“Both the tests will be done by the same clinic. The test can either be done at the clinic or at the workplace. Perkeso maintains the same consultation fee to be paid as in the HSP. (http://text: 19/02/2020 https://payn private clinic rm60 for-work/antib test/ doct

“The participating clinics will be paid RM30 for each visit once the data has been submitted. So, in total, the payment will be RM60 for two visits and the kit is provided by Perkeso,” added the official with the doctors’ group.

It is unknown how many workers of the estimated 400,000 approved during the MCO will be screened with the antibody or PCR tests.

As for the first phase of PCR tests for workers from high-risk areas, Socso will “appoint a vendor in accordance with good procurement practice”.

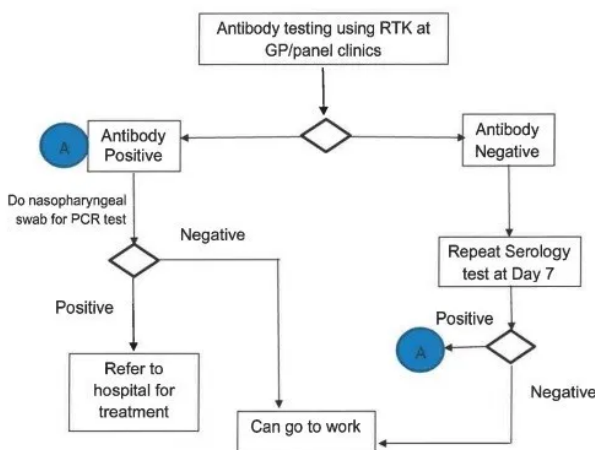
“It will comply to the standards and clinical governance set by the Ministry of Health (MOH). Perkeso with MOH will identify the areas,” Dr Arasu said in his circular.

The circular also read that the HSP clinic system will be recoded and the clinics are waiting for the kits to arrive.

“Estimated, clinic registration to start by end of this week,” said Dr Arasu.

“There will be written circulars from Perkeso to GPs through the SIHAT system. There will be guidelines from MOH to GPs on infection prevention control when conducting the antibody RTKs in the clinic, the quarantine criteria, and interpretation of the IgM/IgG [antibodies],” added the circular.

FLOW CHART FOR ANTIBODY DETECTION TEST FOR WORKERS RETURNING TO WORK IN INDUSTRIES MCO



Graphic from Health director-general Dr Noor Hisham Abdullah’s letter to the Social Security Organisation (Socso) CEO on April 21, 2020.

Last Friday, MOH sent a guideline letter (<https://codeblue.galencentre.org/2020/04/24/moh-sends-socso-covid-19-testing-sop-for-workers/>) to Socso on the Covid-19 testing procedures for workers.

Health director-general Dr Noor Hisham Abdullah said the Covid-19 screening for workers from industries approved to operate during the MCO, of which Socso will bear the costs, could be done at private or Socso panel clinics, using MOH-collaborating private laboratories, through PCR tests or rapid antibody tests.

“At the same time, MOH recommends that all Socso panel medical practitioners take complete medical history, including overseas travel history, exposure to positive Covid-19 cases, and attendance at any gathering or exposure to people who attended gatherings,” Dr Noor Hisham said.

According to MOH's screening standard operating procedure (SOP), if the PCR tests for coronavirus show negative, workers can start working. But if it is positive, they will be treated as Covid-19 patients as per MOH guidelines.

As for the antibody test, also known as serology tests, MOH recommended the usage of serology RTK that are validated by Institute of Medical Research (IMR) or the National Public Health Laboratory (NPHL). The rapid antibody tests recommended are Lionrun Shanghai Liangrun Diagnostics Kit, Wondfo, Vazyme, Standard Q Covid-19 igM/IgG Combo, and Healgen.

Even if the antibody test shows negative, the worker is still not allowed to go to work and will have to retake the test on the seventh day since the first testing. If it shows negative again, only then can the worker resume work. If the serology RTK shows positive, whether on Day 1 or Day 7, clinics are ordered to perform a nasopharyngeal swab for PCR testing on the worker.

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Despite a slowdown in the total number of positive Covid-19 cases daily, central states like Selangor and Kuala Lumpur, as well as Sarawak, are continuing to report new cases every day; whereas new infections have been almost non-existent in the northern and the east coast regions of the peninsula for over a week, save for one or two new cases occasionally.

Yesterday, Selangor, Kuala Lumpur, and Sarawak recorded four, 30 and three new Covid-19 cases respectively, whereas Perlis, Kedah, Penang, Melaka, Johor, Pahang, Terengganu, Kelantan, Putrajaya, and Labuan recorded no new cases. In the northern region, only Perak recorded one new case yesterday.

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