

A Consortium of labs launches COVID-19 screening programme in Malaysia

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Gribbles Pathology, Quantum Diagnostics and Clinipath laboratories in Consortium aim to conduct over 5,000 tests daily with a 24-hour turnaround time



Malaysia's leading private laboratory network, the consortium of three associated laboratories namely Gribbles Pathology (Malaysia), Quantum Diagnostics and Clinipath Malaysia (collectively the "Consortium"), on 8 April 2020 announced the launch of the country's largest COVID-19 collection and testing programme to assist the country's effort to 'flatten the curve'. With the widest collection centre network and the largest testing capacity in the country, the participating laboratories will soon be able to conduct over 5,000 tests daily with 24-hour turnaround time. Patients will have access to reliable and quicker testing at an affordable price.

The programme is being rolled out in phases with the first drive-through service starting on Thursday 9th April 2020 at Clinipath's Headquarters in Klang (No. 23 Galeri Empire, Jalan Empayar Off Persiaran Sultan Ibrahim/KU1, Klang). Bookings commence on Wednesday 8th April 0900 hours. With the same customer service mentality, all the COVID-19 collection sites will service those who order the test from any one of the Consortium laboratory's websites.

While Malaysia has introduced measures to curb the spread of the disease and a number of hospitals have begun offering drive-through services, the challenge of poor access to COVID-19 testing still remains across the country. Malaysia is testing at a current rate of 1,255 tests per million people compared to 6,800 tests per million people in Singapore and 6,500 tests per million people in South Korea.

Tan Sri Dato' Dr Yahya Bin Awang, Chairman of the Consortium said "Both the government and the medical community recognise the need to ramp up testing for the virus in Malaysia. We have been receiving requests from patients, doctors and our partner hospitals seeking a safe, affordable and accessible solution for COVID-19 collection. With our wide network in Malaysia, we are in a unique position to provide this solution. We have been working tirelessly with our partners to roll out this programme to aid contain the spread of COVID-19 in the country."

An organized and safe approach to testing

Testing for COVID-19 and contact tracing are two vital components in our effort to “flatten the curve” and suppress the spread of the disease according to the World Health Organisation, Ministry of Health (MOH) Malaysia and other expert bodies. With this programme, safer and wider access to the collection and quality COVID-19 tests with faster turnaround times will be possible, improving Malaysia’s ability to manage the spread of the virus.

The collection programme will be rolled out across the country in a staggered approach in an effort to ensure the safety of medical professionals and the community. Current facilities will be converted in a phased fashion into a combination of drive-through facilities and walk-in centres with physical barriers between the collector and the patients.

To avoid creating crowds during this period and to ensure the safety of our patients and collectors, the service will be offered on a ‘by appointment’ basis only. To get tested under this programme, patients are required to pre-register and book an appointment online at <https://covid19.gribbles.com.my> and select the collection location and time. This will help ensure adherence to social distancing rules.

In the coming weeks, the three laboratories will be increasing their COVID-19 testing capacity to reach a target of 5000 tests daily with 24-hour turnaround time.

Tan Sri Dato’ Dr Yahya added, “We must remain vigilant during this time and come together to ensure the safety and quick containment of the disease in Malaysia. We are confident that with easier access to tests and quick turnaround time, we will be able to pull through this difficult time as a nation.”

- Details of the service are listed online in the respective websites of the participating laboratories:
 - Gribbles Pathology - www.gribbles.com.my
 - Quantum Diagnostics - www.quantumdxs.com
 - Clinipath - www.clinipath.com.my
- Central Hotline 1800-2-COVID (26843) to assist with patient and doctor queries on the service