EMPHASIZING THE MONITORING SYSTEM AND CLARIFYING THE ROLES OF THE STD/AIDS COOPERATIVE CENTRAL LABORATORY (SACCL) AND THE RESEARCH INSTITUTE FOR TROPICAL MEDICINE (RITM) IN CONF...

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This issuance serves to clarify the monitoring system for HIV/AIDS and the roles the confirmatory laboratories play with regards HIV/AIDS testing within this system.

Pursuant to Article V, Sections 27 and 28 of Republic Act (RA) Number 8504, otherwise known as "Philippine AIDS Prevention and Control Act of 1998", the National Epidemiology Center (NEC) of the Department of Health (DOH) shall serve as AIDSWATCH or the Comprehensive HIV/AIDS Monitoring Program mandated to determine and monitor the magnitude and progresion of HIV infection in the country. In pursuit of this, a standardized Case Reporting Form shall be disseminated to concerned institutions for completion upon identification of HIV-positive individuals on screening (Annex A[*]).

In relation to this, in the 1998 Implementing Rules and Regulations of RA 8504, the Research Institute of Tropical Medicine (RITM) was mandated to perform all confirmatory tests related to HIV. In 2001, by virtue of Department Circular No. 176, s. 2001, the mentioned mandate for RITM was modified. In the said Department Circular, blood specimens reactive to HIV screening tests should be submitted to the STD/AIDS Cooperative Central Laboratory (SACCL) for confirmatory testing.

In order to improve the HIV/AIDS Reporting system and to specifically designate the roles of SACCL and RITM in confirming screened HIV-positive cases, the following guidelines are to be followed:

Confirmed HIV and AIDS cases nationwide shall be reported to the NEC in accordance with the following system (pls. Refer to attached flowchart[*]):

1. All blood samples screened through DOH-accredited hospitals, clinics, laboratories, and testing centers and subsequently found positive for HIV shall submit the HIV-reactive samples together with an adequately filled out Case Reporting Form to the SACCL for confirmation through Western Blot. The SACCL shall then submit the Case Reporting Forms of Western-blot confirmed cases to the NEC for recording.

2. All samples of blood products and blood units screened through blood banks and subsequently found positive for HIV shall submit the HIV-reactive samples together with an adequately filled out Case Reporting Form to the RITM for confirmation through Western Blot. RITM shall then submit the Case Reporting Forms of Western-blot confirmed cases to the NEC for recording.

3. Individual physicians caring for HIV patients shall submit directly to NEC the Case Reporting Forms within five working days of the following:

i. new diagnosis of AIDS in an HIV (+) individual
ii. death of an AIDS case.

For information and guidance.

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Adopted: 31 May 2004

(SGD.) MANUEL M. DAYRIT, MD, MSc
Secretary of Health

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[*] Not Filed with ONAR.

[*] Text Available at Office of the National Administrative Register, U.P. Law Complex, Diliman, Quezon City.

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