AIDS TEST FOR SAUDI-BOUND WORKERS

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Please be informed that in a formal Note Verbale to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs by the Royal Embassy of Saudi Arabia, we were informed that "effective immediately, all Filipino contract workers entering the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia are required to bring with them their medical certificates... stating that they are free from the disease Acquired Immunity Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS)".

Pursuant to this new requirement, the Joint MOH-MOLE Accreditation Committee for the Medical Examination of Overseas Contract Workers just issued the guidelines in the conduct of AIDS test for Saudi-bound workers. Quoted however are pertinent portions of the guidelines for the information by all concerned:

> "1. AIDS Tests Separate from Standard Pre-Employment Medical Examinations - The AIDS test shall be conducted separately and apart from the standard pre-employment medical examinations defined in Section 8 of the Joint MOH-MOLE Rules and Regulations in the Conduct of Medical Examination for Contract Workers. In view thereof:
>
> (a) A separate certificate (AIDS-FREE CERTIFICATE) shall be issued the workers;
>
> (b) The AIDS test shall be conducted only upon request by the Agencies or Entities and only for Saudi-bound workers;
>
> (c) The AIDS test and the standard pre-employment medical examination may be conducted by only one accredited and certified clinic or hospital or by two separate clinics or hospitals.
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> 2. Nature and Methods of Test - An AIDS test conducted in accordance with any of the following World Health Organization (WHO) recommended test shall suffice for compliance with this requirement:
>
> a. ELISA — Enzyme Linked Immuno Sorbent Assay
> b. IF — Immune Fluorescence
> c. WB — Western Blot Method
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> 3. Certification of Clinics or Hospital Capability - Only accredited clinics and licensed hospitals willing to comply with the requirements set in these guidelines shall qualify to conduct the AIDS test for contract workers. For this purpose, the accredited clinic or licensed hospital shall file an application with the Committee Care of the Bureau of Medical Services, MOH, indicating therein the method of examination it wishes to undertake together with the listing of its equipment, facilities and personnel. An inspection of the clinic or hospital shall be conducted by the Committee and only those found capable of conducting the AIDS test shall be certified by the Committee.
>
> 4. Integrity of the AIDS-Free Certificate - The accredited clinic or licensed hospital certified as capable of conducting the AIDS test shall guarantee the integrity of its medical examination. As part of this guaranty, the clinic or hospital shall file with its client agency and with the P.O.E.A. an affidavit of undertaking the cost of repatriation of workers certified by it as AIDS free but were rejected by the Saudi authorities for reason of AIDS. For this purpose, a licensed hospital or accredited in-house clinic wishing to be certified for the conduct of AIDS tests for contract workers shall post a cash bond of FIFTEEN THOUSAND PESOS (P15,000) with the POEA as a requirement for Committee Certification. An accredited bonded clinic is no longer required to post the cash bond to qualify for certification.

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5. Affiliation by an Accredited Clinic with a Certified Hospital or Clinic - An accredited clinic without the facility or the capability of conducting the AIDS test may participate in the program provided it affiliates itself with a duly certified clinic or licensed hospital. For this purpose:

(a) the accredited clinic without the facility shall apply with the Committee for authorization to participate in the program attaching in its application the affiliation agreement with a certified accredited clinic or licensed hospital;

(b) the accredited clinic without the facility may issue the AIDS FREE CERTIFICATE in its name based on the laboratory examination report issued by the certified accredited clinic or licensed hospital; and

(c) The AIDS FREE CERTIFICATE shall be jointly guaranteed by both clinics or hospital.

6. Cost of AIDS Test - The cost of an AIDS test regardless of the method of examination used shall not be more than FOUR HUNDRED PESOS (P400.00). This fee shall be in addition to the authorized fee for the standard pre-employment medical examination.

7. Authentication of Certificates - Only certificates issued by duly certified accredited clinics or licensed hospitals or by accredited clinics in accordance with Paragraph 5 above shall be authenticated by the Committee through the Office of the Chairman in the Ministry of Health."

All private employment agencies, recruitment entities and manning agencies are hereby enjoined to abide by these guidelines to avoid problems in obtaining entry visas for Saudi-bound workers. Appropriate communication have been sent to the Royal Embassy of Saudi Arabia by this office and by the Ministry of Health relative to the system and procedures enumerated in the Committee guidelines.

An updated list of certified clinics and hospitals may be obtained from the office of the Director of WAAO, POEA or from the Office of Health Deputy Minister Antonio Acosta.

For your information and compliance.

Adopted: 3 Feb. 1986

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