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SPECIAL INTEREST GROUP OF THE SOUTH AFRICAN MEDICAL ASSOCIATION

24 June 2020

Dear Colleagues,

COVID19 IN-LABORATORY TESTING TIMES

Demand for testing using PCR for the SARS-CoV-2 Virus, which causes COVID-19 is reaching its peak in the Cape Provinces and we now see the surge beginning in the Northern Provinces of South Africa, especially Gauteng.

Private laboratories are performing approximately 16,000 tests per day with limited potential for greatly increased capacity.

We are triaging test requests as follows:

- Highest priority: Healthcare Workers, in-patients
- Medium priority: out-patients, pre-admissions
- Low priority: return to work, return to school, etc.

The turnaround time for pre-admission testing now stands at 72 hours from the time the specimen is received in the laboratory.

We request that hospitals and admitting clinicians take this into account when pre-admission screening for elective surgery or admission is planned.

We continue to explore possibilities of improving capacity and will keep you updated immediately should we be able to manage the turnaround time downwards.

Thank you for your understanding.

Yours Sincerely,

Dr. John Douglass
CEO
Pathcare

Dr. Mick Forder
CEO
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Dr. Peter Cole
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