



Republic of the Philippines
Department of Health
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

August 1, 2016

DEPARTMENT MEMORANDUM

No. 2016- 0285

- TO: SECRETARY OF HEALTH OF AUTONOMOUS REGION IN MUSLIM MINDANAO (ARMM), NATIONAL TB REFERENCE LABORATORY (NTRL), ALL DOH REGIONAL DIRECTORS AND CHIEF OF HOSPITALS WITH PROGRAMMATIC MANAGEMENT OF DRUG-RESISTANT TUBERCULOSIS (PMDT) TREATMENT FACILITIES AND XPERT SITES**
- SUBJECT: Implementation of Xpert MTB/RIF test as the Primary Diagnostic Tool for Presumptive Drug-Resistant Tuberculosis (DR-TB) and Presumptive Drug Susceptible Tuberculosis (DSTB) among Selected Vulnerable Populations**

The Philippines is one of the 30 countries with high TB burden for drug susceptible and multi drug-resistant tuberculosis according to World Health Organization. In response to this public health problem, the National Tuberculosis Control Program, in collaboration with partners, has accentuated its efforts in TB case finding by implementing new diagnostic tools such as the Xpert Mycobacterium Tuberculosis/Rifampicin (Xpert MTB/RIF) test among other diagnostic initiatives.

The Xpert MTB/RIF test is a rapid molecular diagnostic tool that detects the presence of TB bacteria and rifampicin resistance. This diagnostic tool has been introduced in 2011 and has expanded since. The number of Xpert sites has increased from 16 in 2011 to 185 as of June 2016 and are strategically located nationwide. Additional Xpert cartridges have also been procured to support the expansion of services.

With the steady supply of Xpert cartridges, continuous expansion of Xpert sites and based on the Joint Program Review (JPR) recommendation, Xpert MTB/RIF test shall now be the primary diagnostic tool for **all presumptive DR-TB and presumptive DSTB among selected vulnerable populations** replacing direct sputum smear microscopy (DSSM). This shall apply to the following:

- I. Presumptive DR-TB (Pulmonary and Extra-pulmonary)**
- a. All retreatment cases (relapse, treatment after failure, treatment after lost to follow-up, previous treatment outcome unknown, other)
 - b. Contacts of DR-TB patients
 - c. Non-converter of Category I
 - d. PLHIV with at least one of the four signs/symptoms of TB



II. Presumptive Drug-Susceptible Tuberculosis (DS-TB)

- a. Selected Vulnerable Populations
 - i. Inmates in jails and prisons
 - ii. Children (less than 15 years old)
 - iii. Elderly (60 years old and above)
- b. New Cases who are presumptive extrapulmonary TB

Once a patient has been identified as belonging to any of the abovementioned indications, Xpert MTB/RIF test shall be requested and performed even in the absence of DSSM or chest x-ray result.

For information and compliance.


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Secretary of Health

