

## National Public Health Emergency Team (NPHE) Subgroup on Diagnostic Testing Approaches

### Meeting 2 – Friday 15/05/2020 – 10am by teleconference

#### In attendance:

- Dr Alan Smith - Deputy Chief Medical Officer, DOH (Chair)
- Dr Cillian De Gascun - Director, National Virus Reference Laboratory (NVRL), UCD
- Dr Máirín Ryan - Director of HTA, HIQA
- Dr John Cuddihy – Director, HPSC
- Professor Colm Bergin - Consultant Infectious Diseases, St. James’s Hospital
- Dr Mary Keogan - National Clinical Lead, National Clinical Programme for Pathology, HSE
- Judith Martin - In Vitro Diagnostic Lead, Assessment & Surveillance, Medical Devices, HPRA
- Philip Kelly - Scientific Officer, Medical Devices, HPRA
- Karen McNamara - Medicines and Medical Devices Criticality Group, DoH
- Evette Wade - Population Screening & Chronic Disease Unit, DoH (Secretariat)
- Luke Kearney - Population Screening & Chronic Disease Unit, DoH (Secretariat)

#### Apologies:

- Dr Colm Henry - Chief Clinical Officer, HSE
- Professor Martin Cormican - National Clinical Lead Healthcare Associated Infections and Antimicrobial Resistance Team, HSE (AMRIC)
- Mary Hyland - Medicines and Medical Devices Criticality Group, DoH
- Dr Lorraine Doherty - National Clinical Director for Health Protection, HPSC

#### **1. Welcome and Conflict of Interest Declaration.**

The Chair welcomed members to the call, apologies were noted. No new Col were declared.

#### **2. Minutes from Previous Meeting.**

Point of clarification “The significant workload in obtaining ethical approval.”

**Action: Secretariat to update minutes of meeting on 30/04/2020**

#### **3. Actions from Previous Meeting.**

Completed.

#### **4. Strategic Framework.**

The group focussed its discussions on Section 5 of the strategic framework (Recommendations). Points raised included:

- The principle of the correct deployment of testing to achieve the greatest public health outcome was emphasised in the context of an overall integrated national testing strategy

- There should be sufficient testing capacity to support a national testing strategy
- The importance of efficiencies and the best use of resources was raised
- Multiplex PCR was identified as a likely future testing strategy

**Action: Incorporate revisions to text and recommendations**

- The current status and outstanding requirements of the national seroprevalence study were discussed
- The group considered the role of and the limitations of serology
  - The reliability of serological tests remains an issue. Important to put their role in context
  - There is a limited role for serological tests in diagnosis (e.g. post infectious inflammatory complications)
  - There is a requirement for a minimum set of performance criteria for serological assays before commencing clinical validation
  - It was agreed to reword Section 5 to include wording to the effect that the role of serology will be kept under review
- The position statement of the Royal College of Pathologists of Australasia on COVID19 IgG/IgM RAPID POCT TESTS was referenced i.e.
  - “The public health response will be compromised by the use of these tests in the early stages of COVID disease.”

**Action: Incorporate revisions to text and recommendations**

**5. Next Steps**

The next NPHEt meeting is on Friday 22<sup>nd</sup> May. The Chair will endeavour to update the Strategy Document and forward it to the NPHEt by Wednesday 20<sup>th</sup> May.

**Action: Chair to submit documentation to NPHEt secretariat by Wednesday 20<sup>th</sup> May.**

**6. AOB**

**HPRA Paper - Overview of concerns relating to Immunochromatographic (lateral flow) serology tests for SARS-CoV-2 (Covid-19)**

HPRA highlighted concerns over Immunochromatographic (lateral flow) serology tests. There is no regulatory oversight for these tests and their availability may undermine any national testing strategy. A recommendation to restrict their supply was suggested.

- Regulatory changes would be required to restrict supply
- The TOR of the Subgroup were noted
- It was agreed that Section 5.16 that reflects the current WHO position could be emphasised more strongly

**Action: Chair to reword section 5.16 to capture the point above**

The meeting concluded with the Chair thanking all members for their time and contributions.

**Date of Next Meeting: TBC**