



Republic of the Philippines
Department of Health
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

19 October 2020

DEPARTMENT CIRCULAR

No. 2020- 0358

TO: ALL CENTER FOR HEALTH DEVELOPMENT DIRECTORS, CHIEF OF HOSPITALS/MEDICAL CENTERS/ SANITARIA, REGIONAL BLOOD PROGRAM COORDINATORS, BLOOD BANK HEADS, LEAD BLOOD SERVICE FACILITIES, PROVINCIAL HEALTH OFFICERS, PHILIPPINE RED CROSS OFFICIALS, MINISTRY OF HEALTH OF THE BANGSAMORO AUTONOMOUS REGION IN MUSLIM MINDANAO (MOH-BARMM), AND OTHER STAKEHOLDERS CONCERNED

SUBJECT: Waived Requirement for the Issuance/Renewal of Certificate of Inclusion (COI) of Blood Service Facilities for the Year 2021


Pursuant to Department Memorandum 2016-0448 entitled, "Guidelines on the Issuance of Certificate of Inclusion to Blood Services Network" described Certificate of Inclusion (COI) as part of the licensing/authorization for all Blood Service Facilities actively participating in the network and complying with policies, guidelines, and standards.

One of the documentary requirements in the issuance of COI for Hospital Blood Banks with additional functions and Blood Centers is participation in the National External Quality Assurance Scheme (NEQAS) with Research Institute and Tropical Medicine Transfusion Transmissible Infections-National Reference Laboratory (RITM TTI-NRL) and National Kidney and Transplant Institute Immunohematology- National Reference Laboratory (NKTI IH-NRL).

However, COVID-19 pandemic has greatly affected the normal operations, scheduled trainings and test events of NRLs which included cancellation of NEQAS for 2020 in the abovementioned NRLs. Thus, the Health Regulation Team released Department Circular No. 2020-0306 (Annex A) dated 14 July 2020 entitled, "Waived Requirement for the Renewal of License to Operate a Clinical Laboratory for the Year 2021." Due to the cancellation of NEQAS for 2020, participation of Blood Service Facilities to NEQAS is hereby waived as a requirement for the issuance/ renewal of COI for 2021.

For your information and guidance.

By the Authority of the Secretary of Health:


MYRNA C. CABOTAJE, MD, MPH, CESO III
Undersecretary of Health
Public Health Services Team



Republic of the Philippines
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ANNEX A

July 14, 2020

DEPARTMENT CIRCULAR

No. 2020- 0306

TO : **ALL REGIONAL DIRECTORS, HEADS OF HOSPITALS AND OTHER HEALTH FACILITIES, CHIEFS OF THE HEALTH FACILITIES AND SERVICES REGULATORY BUREAU AND THE CENTERS FOR HEALTH DEVELOPMENT – REGULATION, LICENSING AND ENFORCEMENT DIVISION, MINISTRY OF HEALTH OF THE BANGSAMORO AUTONOMOUS REGION IN MUSLIM MINDANAO (MOH-BARMM), REGULATORY OFFICERS AND OTHER STAKEHOLDERS CONCERNED**

SUBJECT : **Waived Requirement for the Renewal of License to Operate a Clinical Laboratory for the Year 2021**

Pursuant to Department Memorandum No. 2009-0086-B, dated September 8, 2014 titled “Implementation of External Quality Assurance Program (EQAP) as a Regulatory Requirement for Licensing Clinical Laboratories”, all clinical laboratories shall participate in the National External Quality Assessment Scheme (NEQAS) administered by designated National Reference Laboratory (NRL) or other local and international EQAP approved by the Department of Health. A Certificate of Participation in NEQAS is required for the renewal of the License to Operate (LTO) of clinical laboratories.

A Memorandum dated November 28, 2019, titled “Lifting of the Moratorium on the Initial Issuance of License to Operate for a Free Standing Clinical Laboratories Nationwide”, was issued so that laboratories can continuously operate even if they failed to participate in the EQAP.

However, the current COVID-19 pandemic greatly affected the regular operations of the NRLs, such that carrying out of the scheduled test events have been cancelled or delayed. (ANNEX)

In view of the foregoing, the licensing requirement for the NEQAS 2020 Certificate of Participation / Certificate of Performance issued by the designated NRLs is hereby *WAIVED* for the 2021 renewal of LTO of a clinical laboratory.

For your information and guidance.

By Authority of the Secretary of Health:

MARIA ROSARIO SINGH-VERGEIRE, MD, MPH, CESO IV
Undersecretary of Health
Health Regulation Team

ANNEX

July 03, 2020

ATTY. NICOLAS B. LUTERO III, CESO III
Director IV
Health Facilities Services and Regulatory Bureau (HFSRB)
Manila City

Dear Atty. Lutero,

Good day!

The global crisis of COVID-19 pandemic has greatly affected the regular operations of the NRLs. Financial and human resources of the NRLs were diverted to the COVID-19 response as priority.

The Committee on NRL has written a letter to your office dated March 19, 2020 requesting for the extension of the deadline of the National External Quality Assurance Scheme (NEQAS) from the regular deadline of May 31, 2020 to July 31, 2020.

However, with the continued response, three (3) of the NRLs have determined that it will not proceed its EQA event for 2020. A Certificate of Enrollment shall be issued before September 30, 2020 for those who have paid their NEQAS fees.

NATIONAL REFERENCE LABORATORY	EQA PROGRAM	STATUS
Research Institute for Tropical Medicine	Bacteriology Parasitology Tuberculosis Transfusion-Transmissible Infections	Cancelled but accepting registration until September 30, 2020, for the 2021 NEQAS
East Avenue Medical Center	Drug Testing Water Testing	Cancelled but accepting registration until July 31, 2020, for the 2021 NEQAS
National Kidney and Transplant Institute	Hematology	Cancelled but accepting registration until July 31, 2020, for the 2021 NEQAS
San Lazaro Hospital-STD/AIDS Cooperative Central Laboratory	Serology for HIV/Hepa B/ Hepa C	Continue with 2020 NEQAS registration until July 31, 2020
Lung Center of the Philippines	Chemistry	Continue with 2020 NEQAS registration until July 31, 2020

On behalf of the Committee on National Reference Laboratories (NRL), we are submitting the above information for the guidance of the Health Facilities and Services Regulatory Bureau.

Thank you.

Respectfully,

AMADO O. TANDOC III, MD, FPSP
Chairman, Committee on NRLs