

Press Statement: Response to the return to work comment of Mr. Joey Concepcion

We would like to respond in detail to Mr. Joey Concepcion's condemnation of our stand on the use of rapid antibody tests for clearance to return to work.

1. On his justification of the use of rapid antibody tests (RATs) because "all big corporations believe in rapid testing ": Religion and even politics can be based on beliefs. *Science, on the other hand should be based on sound evidence.*

2. On his statement that the tests come from the United States and China – countries "where they were able to control the virus": Mr. Concepcion implies that pandemic control in these countries is attributable to their use of RATs. There is absolutely no proof of this.

3. On his statement "you want us to get the capacity for PCR, there is none": If he had read our guidelines - we do NOT recommend PCR as the alternative test.

4. On his challenge to us "if they have a better solution, what is the better solution": If he had read our guidelines, he would have learned that we offered a better option to clear people for work - the 14-day test (absence of symptoms for 14 days - from time of exposure for contacts, and from time of relief of symptoms for suspects and cases). This clinical test is more accurate than the antibody test and it incurs no additional costs for laboratory procedures.

5. On his statement that companies have suffered losses because of the lockdown: We agree. However, unnecessary laboratory tests will compound these losses.

6. Finally, on his ad hominem attack on the doctors and his ensuing apology saying he only targeted the few who presented: If he had read our [media advisory](#), he would have realized that he was not just talking to a select group of doctors. He was addressing designated representatives of the Philippine Society of Public Health Practitioners (PSPHP) – professionals that monitor the pandemic and plan the response for all sectors of society; the Philippine College of Occupational Medicine (PCOM) – doctors who take charge of assuring the safety and health of the Filipino workforce in different workplaces; The Philippine Academy of Family Physicians (PAFP) and the Philippine Society of General Internal Medicine (PSGIM) – societies of primary care physicians that patients see first upon falling ill; The Philippine Society of Microbiology and Infectious Diseases (PSMID) – our stewards in understanding the behavior of this virus who themselves frontline in the care of COVID-19 patients; the Philippine College of Physicians (PCP) – lung, kidney, brain and heart specialists who attend to complicated COVID-19 cases; and the Philippine Medical Association (PMA) – the revered lead society for ALL physicians in the country.

We respect Mr. Concepcion's right to express his opinion. We studied and understood his previous views in detail, chose to respect them and made no remarks against Project ARK during our press conference. We hope that Mr. Concepcion can return the favor by trying to study and understand our position - the inappropriate use of RATs in clearance for return to work, may lead to unintended harm to our workforce, our frontliners and our already strained health system. If he finds anything amiss, he can offer constructive criticism. An attack on our person rather than on our stand is absolutely uncalled for.

We do not wish to pick a fight with you Mr. Concepcion. We cannot be enemies. We already have a formidable one and that is COVID-19.

Reference: <https://www.psmid.org/unified-covid-19-algorithms-1/>