



भारती आहुजा, पी.प्र.से.

अपर सचिव

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GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF HEALTH & FAMILY WELFARE
NIRMAN BHAVAN, NEW DELHI - 110011

D.O. No. Z. 28015/185/2021-DM Cell

Dated the 17th January, 2022

Dear *Su / Madam,*

As you are aware, the Omicron which has been designated by WHO as variant of concern (VOC) is currently spreading across the country. Please recall my earlier letters in this regard, and especially the advisory of MHA dated 27th December, 2021 laying out the broad framework of pandemic management in the context of omicron. Testing remains a key and crucial component of the framework.

However, it is seen from the data available on the ICMR portal that testing has declined in many States and Union Territories.

Please note that in all Advisories on testing issued by ICMR including the latest advisory dated 10th January, 2022, the basic objective remains early detection of cases for quick isolation & care. In addition, testing remains a key strategy for pandemic management on the following two counts:

1. Identification of new clusters and new hotspots of infection which can in turn facilitate immediate action for containment such as setting up of containment zones, contact tracing, quarantining, isolation and follow up. This can enable the State and district administration to curb the spread of infection.
2. Ensuring reduction in mortality and morbidity. Progression of disease to a severe category can be averted by strategic testing of those who are at high risk and more vulnerable, as well as in areas where the spread is likely to be higher.

I would like to re-iterate the advisory on purposive testing strategy issued by ICMR on 10th January 2022. As per the strategy, in community settings:

- All those who are symptomatic must be tested.
- All at risk contacts of laboratory confirmed cases must also be tested.

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This advisory needs to be read in conjunction with the earlier guidelines and advisories of the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Govt. of India wherein it has been recommended that strategic and focused testing should be done of people who are vulnerable, living in closed surroundings, in densely populated areas in emerging new clusters & new hot spots of positive cases etc.

In order to ensure that an effective track of the spread of the pandemic is kept and also immediate citizen centric action is initiated, it is incumbent upon all States/UTs to enhance testing. I am sure you will pay attention to this aspect immediately and increase the testing in a strategic manner keeping in view the trend of case positivity in specific geographies within in your States/UTs.

With warm regards,

Yours sincerely,


(Arti Ahuja)

ACS/PS/Secretary (Health) of all States/UTs

Copy for information to:- DG, ICMR & Secretary, DHR