

# GHANA ASSOCIATION OF MEDICAL LABORATORY SCIENTISTS

IN CASE OF REPLY THE NUMBER AND  
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Our Ref...GAMLS/NS//PR/09/20

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05<sup>TH</sup> MAY, 2020

## GAMLS ENQUIRES: DELAYS IN EXPANDING COVID-19 TESTING IN GHANA?

The Ghana Association of Medical Laboratory Scientists (GAMLS) in updating members and the public wishes to ask authorities questions relating to delay in expanding COVID-19 testing across the country as directed by the President in his 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> Address on COVID-19 to the nation?

1. Ghana, at the moment, battles with 2719 cases of COVID-19, 294 recoveries and 18 deaths.
2. Data available reveals that community infection with SARS COV-2 is increasing and the only way to track is by testing as advised by the global health community.
3. In previous addresses of the President of Ghana on COVID-19 to the state, capacity was going to be expanded to other facilities to allow testing for COVID-19.
4. This is the only way we could promptly test and release results for patient management and actively assess to estimate the true burden of the infection in our communities.
5. On facilities to start testing apart from the major ones, a) University for Health and Allied Sciences (UHAS), Ho in the Volta Region, b) Public Health Reference Laboratory, Tamale in the Northern Region, c) Veterinary Laboratory, Pong in the Northern Region, d) Western Veterinary Laboratory/Public Health Reference Laboratory in Western Region have all started testing using Real Time PCR.

As we seem to be making gains, GAMLS and its professionals are worried and asks the following;

1. Why is there silence on the use of the GeneXpert (TB testing machine which can be adopted to test for COVID-19) available in a minimum of 100 Clinical Laboratories in Ghana? What is holding government from facilitating the procurement of reagents (cartridges) that could enable COVID-19 testing and produce results in 45 minutes using the GeneXpert equipment?
2. What is preventing government from listening to the call of professionals to provide testing centers in other parts of the country, especially those in Bono, Bono East, Ahafo, Upper West and Upper East?

GAMLS reiterates the call for the implementation of the National Health Laboratory Policy (NHLP) and representation of Medical Laboratory Professionals at management level to contribute to the healthcare infrastructure investment and the building of the infectious disease control centres as promised by government. We also call for the provision of required Personal Protective Equipment (PPEs) for routine use and COVID-19 patient testing. As a matter of urgency, government should get the qualified but unemployed professionals to come and support in the facilities.

We salute our professionals for routinely handling and testing samples from COVID-19 patients with the limited biosafety provisions for patient care. The public is encouraged to respect the directive by the President and strictly maintain the good personal hygiene practices.

Laboratory regards,

**Dr. Dennis Adu-Gyasi, FWAPCMLS (Immunol)**  
**GAMLS, PUBLIC RELATIONS, 05<sup>th</sup> May 2020**

MEMBER INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION OF BIOMEDICAL LABORATORY SCIENCE (IFBLS)  
FEDERATION OF AFRICAN ASSOCIATION OF MEDICAL LABORATORY SCIENTISTS (FAAMLS)  
CLINICAL AND LABORATORY STANDARDS INSTITUTE (CLSI)  
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