

UFISINAN I MAGA'HÅGA
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

LOURDES A. LEON GUERRERO
MAGA'HÅGA • GOVERNOR



JOSHUA F. TENORIO
SIGUNDO MAGA'LÅHI • LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR

April 15, 2020

Honorable Tina Rose Muña Barnes
Speaker
I Mina'trentai Singko Na Liheslaturan Guåhan
Guam Congress Building
Hagåtña, Guam 96910

Dear Madame Speaker:

Governor Lou Leon Guerrero's Physician Advisory Group is in receipt of your letter dated April 14th regarding the potential use of South Korean test kits for COVID-19 confirmations. While it is clear that mass testing is essential to combating this virus, that testing must be safe, accurate and reliable.

Unfortunately, as recently as yesterday afternoon, my conversations with the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) indicate that the specific test kits alluded to in your letter have not yet received FDA approval or an "Emergency Use Authorization". This is despite the fact that some international media have said the exact opposite.

To be clear, this does not mean that your suggestion is without value. The kits referred to in your letter can be used to determine COVID-19 infections on a presumptive basis. This simply means that results—both positive and negative—will have to be confirmed by another test meeting FDA and U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) standards.

Given the national shortage of test kits, some U.S. jurisdictions may be willing to adopt protocols that deviate from the standard of care. But that is not the direction dictated by our present circumstance.

Pending additional guidance from the FDA and CDC, we must understand that though more testing should be done—unreliable test results can become even more dangerous than no testing at all.

Because even one COVID-19 positive patient can be an unwitting weapon against our entire community, I fully appreciate your desire to rapidly develop our testing capacity.

This is why we worked to obtain rapid ID test kits and equipment from Abbott laboratories. Guam has received a commitment of 200 Abbott ID Now test kits a week which can obtain results within minutes. Additionally, these kits have received "Emergency Use Authorization" by the FDA.

As a physician and former Lieutenant Governor of Guam, I understand the immense challenge faced by island leaders today. Please know that I and other physicians actively review testing and treatment innovations for COVID-19 throughout the world. If tests like the one you have mentioned can return a credible result—one that is accepted by the FDA and the CDC—I will have no problem recommending their use.

Our advisory group also understands that both the science and technology behind COVID-19 testing is developing rapidly. For this reason, we are preparing to outline protocols for the adoption of new tests. Until then, should you have any information demonstrating that this foreign test has been approved by the FDA and CDC, please feel free to share it with me.

Senseramente,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'MC', written in a cursive style.

Michael Cruz, MD, MBA