

SUPPLY OF RAPID ANTIGEN TESTING TO NON-GOVERNMENT ORGANISATIONS POLICY

Department of Human Services (DHS)

Summary

This policy sets out the roles, responsibilities, and arrangements with regard to the supply of rapid antigen tests to DHS and SAHA commissioned non-government organisations providing direct frontline services to vulnerable cohorts during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Table 1 - Document Details

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| Policy Number | |
| Applies to | All DHS Staff and contracted Non-Government Organisations |
| Issued by | Office of the Chief Executive |
| Delegated Authority | Lois Boswell, Chief Executive |
| Policy Custodian | Office of the Chief Executive |
| Content author (position & phone no) | Ksharmra Brandon, A/Executive Director Strategy and Reform, |
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| Confidentiality | For Official Use Only |
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Table 2 – Revision Record

| Date | Version | Revision description |
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| 5.1.2022 | 1.0 | Original version of the policy |

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1. Policy Title

Supply of Rapid Antigen Tests to Non-Government Organisations Policy.

2. Purpose

This policy sets out the roles, responsibilities, and arrangements with regard to the supply of Rapid Antigen Tests (RAT) to Department of Human Services (DHS) and South Australian Housing Authority (SAHA) commissioned Non-Government Organisations (NGO) providing direct frontline services to vulnerable cohorts. This will support continuity of workforce and reduce the risk of transmission of COVID-19 to exceptionally vulnerable South Australians during the Omicron outbreak of COVID-19 that commenced in late December 2021.

3. Context

It is crucial that NGOs maintain their workforce, particularly those providing direct frontline services to vulnerable cohorts (in their homes or experiencing homelessness). This includes services for those experiencing Domestic Violence (DV), requiring intensive family support, food security services or community passenger networks (direct passenger transport).

Where workers are impacted by a COVID-19 diagnosis or contact, structures need to be in place to support their return to work as soon as possible. Rapid antigen screening is a way to support this, as their addition to the mix of screening options in South Australia increases access to testing as well as providing extra convenience to people to test more frequently. RAT also protects vulnerable clients and workers as it provides a level of assurance that workers on shift do not have COVID-19.

RAT is a tool to support the pandemic response but does not replace other COVID-19 management strategies including appropriate use of Personal Protection Equipment (e.g. mask-wearing, gloves, gowns, face shields, goggles), hand hygiene, physical distancing, and vaccination. This also includes not attending work if unwell, isolating where instructed by SA Health or following requirements in line with the definition of a close contact of a person who has tested positive to COVID-19. RATs should be utilised in accordance with the latest advice from SA Health, and in line with any direction under the Emergency Management Act 2004, including the [Exposure Sites, Contacts and Diagnosis Requirements Direction](#).

4. Scope

This policy applies to DHS and SAHA commissioned NGO services who are required to provide direct frontline services during the COVID-19 pandemic, and do not have the option of deferring or providing on-line services due to the vulnerability of their client population. RATs supplied must only be used by that part of the NGO workforce that delivers those frontline services.

This policy does not apply to DHS or SAHA (one off) grant funded services, or DHS commissioned services who do not provide direct client services.

5. Policy Detail

5.1 NGO use of DHS supplied RATs

To support the ongoing safe delivery of essential services to vulnerable populations within the COVID-19 pandemic, NGOs will be provided with sufficient RATs to:

- undertake surveillance three times a week for each frontline staff member who is having direct client contact with vulnerable populations. The three times a week recommendation is based on a full-time equivalent position, working three or more consecutive days per week. Where staff are working adhoc days (ie no more than two consecutive days in a row), surveillance should be undertaken before each shift, but not two days in a row.
- undertake daily testing pre-shift for Supported Independent Living (SIL) staff who are close contacts who are operating under the SIL close contact protocol.
- provide testing to homeless clients, who are deemed at a higher risk of contracting and spreading COVID-19.

NGOs are required to review and adhere to SA Health information on the use of [RATs](#).

Any employee with symptoms of COVID-19 should seek a PCR test for diagnosis of COVID rather than a RAT and follow SA Health requirements where a positive result is received. Testing protocols are changing rapidly – please always refer to the [SA Health website](#) for the latest information.

RATs supplied by the DHS are not to be used outside of the above conditions, without written approval by the Chief Executive, DHS.

5.2 Distribution of RAT kits

NGO's will undertake the following steps to access DHS provided RAT kits:

- NGO estimates reasonable weekly use, based on the number of staff having direct client contact and conditions outlined in section 5.1 i.e. to ensure test requirements for surveillance, close contact SIL provision and homeless clients
- NGO to email quantity requested to DHS: DHSAssetsRequests@sa.gov.au
- NGO will be advised by return email from the DHS of collection time for the RAT kits
- NGO to collect RAT kits from DHS collection point: Mareeba Building, 19-21 Belmore Terrace, Woodville 5011 (entry via Park Street North) at the time

identified. NGO may call staff at the centre on 0436 687 320 if there are any issues or queries

- If the NGO is unable to collect RAT kits from DHS collection point (e.g. for regional services), NGO may contact centre staff to arrange courier delivery.

DHS will take all reasonable steps to fulfil RAT orders; however, given limited supply this may not always be possible, and DHS will then supply services where clients are at the highest exposure risk.

5.3 Costs

DHS will provide RATs at no cost to NGOs, however where NGOs are able to claim reimbursement or have RAT costs covered by other systems (e.g. NDIS) DHS will recover those costs.

5.4 Duration

This policy is only intended to remain in effect until reasonable business as usual procedures can be put in place to ensure provision of services to vulnerable people. This policy will be reviewed at the end of January 2022 and thereafter at the discretion of the Chief Executive, DHS.

6. Risk

A policy to guide the supply and distribution of RATs ensures effective and efficient management of current supplies and reduces the risk to service continuity and COVID-19 transmissions for vulnerable cohorts.

7. Definitions

- Close contact – the definition of a close contact in South Australia can be found on the [SA Health website](#).
- COVID-19 – Coronaviruses are a large family of viruses that can cause respiratory infections. Severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS CoV 2), also known as the coronavirus is the virus that causes COVID-19.
- PCR – Polymerase chain reaction test is a diagnostic test, where specimens (deep nasal and throat samples) are tested in a clinical laboratory. PCR tests can confirm if someone has COVID-19. This is a highly accurate test.
- PPE – Personal protective equipment (e.g. face masks, gloves, gowns, face shields, goggles), when selected and worn appropriately, helps keep workers safe and can reduce the spread of COVID-19.
- RAT – Rapid antigen test is a screening test which can be performed outside of the diagnostic laboratory. When used regularly, rapid antigen tests help identify individuals who may be infectious early on. When used as a single test it has a significantly lower chance of detecting COVID-19 than PCR testing.

8. Reference Documents

8.1 Directive documents

SA Health [Guidelines and Standard Operating Procedures: Provision of COVID-19 Rapid Antigen Screening in Clinical and Non-Clinical Settings](#)

8.2 Supporting documents

Nil

8.3 Related documents and resources

[SA Health Testing and Tracing website](#)

9. Aboriginal Impact Statement Declaration

The needs and interests of Aboriginal people have been considered in the development of the policy and there is no specific direct or indirect impact on Aboriginal people.

10. Policy Approval

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| <p>Content Author: Ksharmra Brandon Date: 6 /1/2022</p> | <p>Approved via email Ksharmra Brandon A/Executive Director, Strategy and Reform 06 / 01 / 2022</p> |
| <p>Comments:</p> | <p style="text-align: center;">APPROVED</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Lois Boswell</p> <p style="text-align: center;">-----</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Chief Executive</p> <p style="text-align: center;">10 / 01 / 2022</p> |