

**MS-DM- 4496 -2021**

San José, June 10<sup>th</sup>, 2021

Madam  
Panagiota Baloji  
**President to**  
Conférence du Jeune Barreau de Bruxelles  
[president@cjbb.be](mailto:president@cjbb.be)

Dear Madam:

Receive a cordial greeting. I hereby allow myself to refer to the situation presented in the month of May when a group of Belgian tourists who visited our country.

As you well point out, one person in the group made up of 30 people obtained a positive result in the RT-PCR test for SARS-CoV-2, which was carried out to comply with the requirements to enter the country of residence. Although the other members of the group obtained negative results to the same test, the document **LS-VS-001. National Guidelines for Surveillance of COVID-19 disease<sup>1</sup>** states that:

1. The positive results of any test for the diagnosis of COVID-19 may not be refuted by other negative tests during the period of validity of the issued health order (antigens, isothermal molecular tests or RT-PCR), so the carrying out another test in the same or in another private establishment in order to cancel the first positive result. (Section 5.3 Detection, page 12).
2. Probable and confirmed suspected cases will be isolated according to the condition of the disease state of the patient; the times are established in section 5.11 Indications to determine the recovery of positive patients for COVID-19. (Section 5.9 Isolation of cases, page 16).
3. Close contact with a suspected, probable or confirmed COVID-19 case is defined as that person who, without having used the appropriate protection measures (as established by the Ministry of Health in its guidelines), was in contact 48 hours before the onset of symptoms and up to 10 days later and you have any of the following conditions:
  - a. Provided care for a symptomatic case, either in the home or health care setting.
  - b. Has had direct exposure to mucus or saliva from a symptomatic person, either from a sneeze or cough, or from kissing, or shared food or eating utensils.

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<sup>1</sup> [https://www.ministeriodesalud.go.cr/sobre\\_ministerio/prensa/docs/ls\\_vs\\_001\\_version\\_20\\_vigilancia\\_COVID19\\_11052021.pdf](https://www.ministeriodesalud.go.cr/sobre_ministerio/prensa/docs/ls_vs_001_version_20_vigilancia_COVID19_11052021.pdf)

- c. Has been face to face with a case less than 1.8 meters away and for more than 15 minutes.
  - d. Has been in a closed place (classroom, office, session room, waiting area or room) with a symptomatic case at a distance of less than 1.8 meters, for a period greater than or equal to 15 minutes.
  - e. In the environment of an airplane, passengers located within a radius of two seats around a symptomatic case or the crew that provided direct care during the flight to said person. (Section 5.10 Contact Study, page 16 - 17).
4. Follow up of contacts. Follow-up for Close Contacts of confirmed COVID-19 case:
- a. Contacts must be notified no later than 48 hours after the confirmed case is identified, both work and home. (The following variables must be included: name, identity card, exact address with province, canton and district, email, telephone and date of last contact).
  - b. Close contacts of a confirmed case who do not present symptoms will be quarantined at the current address for a total period of 10 days, which will be counted from the date on which the last contact with the confirmed case was made. (Review the Guidance section for the management of close contact between a person confirmed by laboratory for COVID 19 and a person vaccinated against the disease) (Section 5.10 Study of contacts, page 17).
5. Guide for the management of close contact between a person confirmed by laboratory for COVID 19 and a person vaccinated against the disease. People vaccinated against COVID-19 who are in contact with a person who is positive for SARS-CoV-2 will be considered a low-risk contact as long as they meet the following criteria:
- a. Complete vaccination schedule for COVID-19.
  - b. 14 days after completion of the vaccination schedule.
  - c. Absence of symptoms. (page 22)

This being the case, I would like to indicate that, upon receiving the report of the positive result from the laboratory and having carried out the search for contacts in that positive case, the local level of this Ministry acted in accordance with the provisions of the National Guidelines for the Surveillance for COVID-19 disease.

Now, in this particular case, as part of the follow-up process for each positive case and its contacts, the head of the clinical laboratory of the Metropolitan Hospital reported on May 24 that, when sending the sample to be sequenced, it was identified that The sample taken on May 22 from the patient who obtained positive results, the data was entered erroneously in the report, so the correct result was negative, and not positive as reported to the patient and to this Ministry. At that point, the laboratory proceeds with a verification and the result is effectively negative for the detection of SARS-CoV-2. The foregoing was reported to this Ministry on May 24.



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Upon receiving said notification from the laboratory, the health orders issued for the isolation of the persons identified as contacts are lifted. These uprisings are final on May 15 in the morning. Likewise, the identification of this situation and error by the laboratory has generated us great concern, together with the activation of mechanisms for the in-depth investigation of the case, which leads us to implement the necessary corrective measures.

Although these provisions and the actions taken had a negative effect on the group's logistical and travel arrangements, I am fully confident that, as a lawyer, you will share the criteria that current regulations, regardless of their nature, must be fully complied with, very especially those such as the ones mentioned before, whose objective is to protect the health of the population.

Finally, I do regret that this situation has affected the enjoyment of the group's last days in our country.

With kind regards,

Dr. Daniel Salas Peraza  
**HEALTH MINISTER**

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