The Solidarity to Eliminate COVID-19 and CISDI Provide Thousands of Free Antibody Rapid Test, RT-PCR and Personal Protective Equipment Packages for High-Risk Health Workers

- The Solidarity to Eliminate COVID-19 and CISDI provide 1,000 antibody rapid tests; 4,000 Real-Time PCR and 8,000 Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) packages for health workers and health facility staff at high-risk of COVID-19.
- Working together with 6 hospitals in Jakarta and the Microbiology Laboratory of the University of Indonesia since end of March, the Solidarity to Eliminate COVID-19 and CISDI screened and tested thousands of health workers and staffs of health facilities in Jakarta so that the COVID-19 medical procedure can be performed in a timely manner.
- The public health practitioners network and the civil society organization provide the support free of charge and facilitate access for health workers through digital consultation as its initial screening method.

Jakarta, April 20, 2020 – Jakarta becomes the epicentre of COVID-19 in Indonesia with 3,112 positive COVID-19 cases per 20 April 2020. Based on the information released by the Provincial COVID-19 Task Force, there are 174 health workers with positive COVID-19 status spread across 41 hospitals, four primary healthcare services and a private clinic (data as of April 12, 2020) in Jakarta alone. Health workers are among the most vulnerable groups with a high risk of being infected with SARS-COV-2 virus as the frontline of the national health system and this situation needs immediate attention. A network of public health experts, health professionals, public policy observers, and civil society organizations under the Solidarity to Eliminate COVID-19 (Solidaritas Berantas COVID-19 / SBC) powered by the Center for Indonesia’s Strategic Development Initiatives (CISDI), a civil society organization focusing on health development, provide 1,000 rapid test kits, 4,000 RT-PCR, and 8,000 packages of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) free of charge. This commitment is part of the network’s agenda that prioritizes the protection of health workers as an integral effort to the COVID-19 prevention.

Health workers are the pillars that drive the national health system during the COVID-19 pandemic that has hit Indonesia since early March 2020. With the highest number of cases in Indonesia, health workers in Jakarta must provide appropriate and immediate health services to the public. With the province’s limited capacity for testing and tracking cases, this
condition imposes a great risk for health workers to be able to work safely in health facilities. Moreover, health workers are often faced with situations that require them to provide health services without optimal protection.

**Prof. Dr. dr. Akmal Taher, SpU (K), Chair of the Indonesian Urology College and the initiator of the Solidarity to Eliminate COVID-19**, said that the emergency situation of health workers was not only caused by the scarcity of protective equipment but also the limited amount of screening and testing facilities. “Currently, Jakarta has more than 10 million population, while the availability of RT-PCR is approximately 1,200 kits per day. This situation resulted in the long line of test queue and a longer time duration necessary to conduct the test at the government-appointed laboratories. However, the clock keeps ticking while health workers and staff of health facilities are stationed in the most vulnerable setting where they are exposed to the high risk of exposure to patients with COVID-19 accidentally. This situation potentially creates local transmission within the health facilities itself. The spread can be suppressed immediately if only we could discover and trace positive cases immediately. There is nothing important right now than screening and testing, in addition to the use of complete protective equipment and the application of clean and healthy living behaviour among health workers and staff. Without massive rapid tests, health facilities will be burdened by the human resource crisis. This then has an impact on the delay in medical services and the increasing burden of morbidity and death.”

The situation was acknowledged by **Dr. Syarief Hasan Luthfie, Director of the Jakarta Hajj Hospital**, a state hospital operated under the management of the Ministry of Religious Affair. "The limited capacity of testing, as well as the long duration that is required to announce the results of tested cases, were clearly the obstacles that hinder us from implementing immediate isolation and treatment policy to our staff. At the same time, the number of patients and suspects of COVID-19 continues to rise so we cannot directly isolate all health workers with “patients under surveillance” status unless their tests have been proven positive. For this reason, we greatly appreciate the support of the SBC and CISDI, which prioritize the protection for health workers in Jakarta specifically our staff at the Jakarta Hajj Hospital. The Indonesian Minister of Religion also expressed his appreciation for this initiative.”

**Arifin Panigoro, a Member of the Indonesian Presidential Advisory Council & the Founder of the Solidarity to Eliminate COVID-19 (SBC)**, stressed that the safety of health workers has always been referred to by President Joko Widodo as a priority in a pandemic situation. Arifin stated, “The Solidarity to Eliminate COVID-19 as a collective platform for civil society
organizations and individuals who are highly concerned with the COVID-19 pandemics, prioritizes the protection of health workers who are currently at the frontline of the health services. The network has donated 1,000 Antibody Rapid Test to health workers and health facilities workers in Jakarta, including the Cipto Mangunkusumo Hospital and Tarakan Regional Hospital. The network also provides Real Time Polymerase Chain Reaction (RT-PCR) free of charge to 1,000 health workers and health facilities staff providing medical services to the patients of COVID-19. The Solidarity to Eliminate COVID-19 will continually expand our support to RT-PCR tests to at least 4,000 health workers and health facilities staff to outside of Jakarta.”

The SBC’s antibody rapid test and RT-PCR program for health workers and health facilities’ staff was started gradually on March 26, 2020, in which SBC powered by CISDI partnered with the Jakarta Islamic Hospital Sukapura, the Jakarta Islamic Hospital Pondok Kopi, the Jakarta Hajj Hospital, Cipto Mangunkusumo National Hospital, Harapan Kita Hospital, and Tarakan Regional Hospital. Simultaneously, the Jakarta Islamic Hospital Pondok Kopi and the Jakarta Hajj Hospital have agreed to become the partners of the SBC network powered by CISDI to swab specimens of health workers and health facilities’ staff from the other area in Jakarta. For this scheme, the SBC network powered by CISDI optimizes online consultation supported by GrabHealth powered by Good Doctor. The online consultation allows health workers who feel at risk of COVID-19 infection to register and consult through the GrabHealth application, and then referred for a rapid test or RT-PCR.

According to Olivia Herlinda, CISDI Policy Director, the screening and testing program conducted by the SBC network powered by CISDI together with their respected partners is one of the efforts to fill the gap in handling COVID-19 in Jakarta. “We have received requests from health workers and staff from various health facilities in Jakarta and other cities. However, due to capacity constraints, we cannot facilitate all the requests. Observing such a high interest from the health workers and health facilities staff to join the program, we identified a large gap in COVID-19 screening and testing for health workers due to its limited availability and the speed of output. This finding encourages us to expand this program to outside of Jakarta if possible, in order to provide an opportunity of screening and testing more quickly to health workers and health facilities’ staff.”

Diah Saminarsih, the Senior Advisor on Gender and Youth to the WHO Director General, encourages governments and health care providers to continue the efforts that will increase testing capacity to stop COVID-19 from spreading. “The key to suppressing the spread of cases is testing, tracking cases, and immediate isolation. More examinations will certainly speed up
case finding and prevent wider virus dissemination. The Solidarity to Eliminate COVID-19 and CISDI show that civil society is ready to collaborate with the government to complement each other. Without this effort, the capacity of medical services will be overwhelmed by the surge of cases and shortages of personnel which ultimately has implications for the powerlessness of health facilities. We do not want this to happen so I urge the government to open up to the potential of collaboration with civil society, private sector and researchers as well as to encourage the utilization of innovative technologies in an effort to put an end to this plague.”

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About Solidaritas Berantas COVID-19
Solidaritas Berantas COVID-19 (the Solidarity to Eliminate COVID-19/SBC) is a network of public health experts, health professionals, public policy observers, and civil society organizations with diverse backgrounds and expertise who have experience and trustworthy track record in monitoring the process of making public policies in favor of the community. Some of the members of the coalition include CISDI (as SBC Secretariat), Stop TB Partnership Indonesia, the National Committee of Tobacco Control (Komnas PT), PPTI, HOPE Worldwide, LKNU, as well as experts and public health practitioners.

About CISDI
Center for Indonesia’s Strategic Development Initiatives (CISDI) is a civil society organization that supports the realization of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) through health development and young people’s involvement in health development. CISDI’s portfolio and priority issues include managing primary health service strengthening programs in remote areas, conducting health policies research and analysis, conducting social change campaigns, and participating in health diplomacy events at national and global levels. CISDI’s flagship program includes the primary health services strengthening program, Pencerah Nusantara, that was adopted as a national program by the Ministry of Health in 2015 as the Nusantara Sehat program, which is expected to strengthen primary health services in more than 5,000 remote and borderline areas. CISDI is also actively advocating for policies on other health issues such as tobacco control, community nutrition, and the involvement of young people in health development.

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Appendix

Picture 1. In gradual terms, the SBC network powered by CISDI donated a rapid test kit, RT-PCR kit, and Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) to the Jakarta Hajj Hospital and other hospitals in the Jakarta area.

Picture 2. Health workers were seen conducting a Real-Time Polymerase Chain Reaction test to her fellow at the Jakarta Hajj Hospital, supported by the RT-PCR kit donated by the SBC network powered by CISDI.