



ICAO | UNITING AVIATION

# Briefing to ACCRPG/6

## Public Health Subgroup (PH SG)

*Rapporteur: Dr. Chong Chun Hon*

*28 August 2020*



- PH Subgroup conducted one meeting since ACCRPG/5: **7<sup>th</sup> meeting (27 August)**
- **Re-cap of focus of the PH-Subgroup:** Public health related recommendations of CART Report

**Recommendation 4:** Global and regional harmonization of procedures is essential to strengthen public and passenger confidence in air travel. To that end, Member States should establish aviation public health procedures aligned with the guidance in the Take-off Guidance for Air Travel through the COVID-19 public health crisis.

**Recommendation 5:** Discontinuation of the risk mitigation measures which are no longer needed when the transmission diminishes in support of fastest possible return to normal aviation operations.

- **Approach:**

**CART Take-off Guidance:** collate key challenges in implementation of PH measures; assist with clarifications / share best practices / propose changes to guidance

**Aviation-PH Coordination:** explore avenues to enhance understanding and facilitation from PHAs of States to remove impediments to aviation re-start and recovery



➤ **Top 3 Challenges**

**Testing / Quarantine / Recovered Persons**

Impact of imported cases on – healthcare resources; transmission in community; public confidence; aviation

**Establish structured communications between Aviation and PH Authorities**

Build consensus to facilitate aviation restart and recovery – science-based, risk calibrated approach and solutions

**Challenges in implementing CART guidance**

Share best practices – mostly clarifications, work around

Ambiguities – propose changes or further deliberations at ICAO HQ

Infrastructural/financial constraints – work around, mitigations



## TESTING / QUARANTINE / RECOVERED PERSONS

### ➤ Assessing Risk of Importation

- Correlated to true community incidence in source country
- Reported incidence in source country dependent on:
  - Testing strategy (incl. case definition, contact tracing, case finding, active surveillance, sentinel surveillance)
  - Testing capacity
  - Operational factors (eg. access to testing)
- Cases in well-contained settings in source country do not pose exportation risk
  - Contacts under quarantine
  - Isolated communities or areas



## TESTING / QUARANTINE / RECOVERED PERSONS

### ➤ Mitigating Risk of Importation

- Isolation at source country followed by PCR test before departure
  - Safest but most onerous
- Pre-departure screening and PCR testing:
  - PCR negative test on its own does not “clear” traveler of COVID infection, could still be incubating disease
  - Old infections still shedding viral fragments, but these could be the “safe” ones
  - Marginal incremental impact if incidence in source and destination countries are similar
  - Applied correctly could reduce risk significantly
- Arrival testing and isolation (only to mitigate risk of community spread)
  - Impact on public and passenger confidence
  - Potential impact on health resources of destination countries



## TESTING / QUARANTINE / RECOVERED PERSONS

### ➤ Facilitating cross-border movement for recovered persons

- Persons who have recovered from COVID-19 may still test positive intermittently by RT-PCR for many months
  - PCR detects non-viable viral fragments
  - Risk of transmission minimal; no documented transmission
- Pre-departure PCR testing will bar such recovered persons from travelling for months due to positive test:
  - Social and economic impact on individuals and States
  - Economic impact on aviation
- International consensus, led by WHO, is pending; regional efforts
  - Mounting number of recovered persons world wide, sizeable number could be displaced
  - Recovered persons do not pose public health risk, but consume resources



## ESTABLISH STRUCTURED COMMUNICATIONS BETWEEN AVIATION AND PH AUTHORITIES

### ➤ ACCRPG Public Health Subgroup recommends

For the ICAO APAC Regional Office to convene a “roundtable”, co-moderated with WHO rep

- CAAs, International Organisations (IATA, ACI) and States’ Public Health Authorities (PHA)
- Discuss and build consensus on public health measures in the region, such as
  - Development of harmonised standards for pre-departure testing
  - Acceptance of discharge letters for recovered COVID-19 persons.
- PH subgroup to develop the agenda

Perhaps start with members in ACCRPG who are able to secure the participation of their PH counterparts



*END of briefing*

For discussion

---

Thank you