

**MedLife has launched a pilot testing project to test its own medical and auxiliary staff that come into contact with the patient, in order to detect antibodies to COVID 19**

*The company is working in parallel with the development of best practices guide to support Romanian companies to restart their activity as the authorities decide to lift the restrictions on the COVID pandemic*

*Bucharest, April 14, 2020:* In the context of the potential decrease in the coming months of the number of new confirmed cases of COVID 19 infection at national level, MedLife, the leader of the private medical services market in Romania, announces that is starting a pilot testing project for detection of antibodies to COVID 19. The project supports the efforts made by the public health authorities to find out the real situation regarding the infection and spread of the virus.

According to the experts, RT-PCR tests, currently used globally to diagnose COVID-19 cases, indicate the presence of viral material during acute infection, but cannot indicate whether a person has developed antibodies. Therefore, a possible recommendation is that RT-PCR testing be supplemented with blood antibody testing that can be used to identify if people have been exposed to a certain pathogen, checking their immune response.

*"The COVID-19 pandemic has been declared by World Health Organization as the main emergency for public health of international interest. One of the main recommendations of the WHO as a weapon to fight against this pathology is to test as many people as possible. In fact, mass testing is the solution to know exactly the real situation of cases of infection with the new coronavirus and to keep the pandemic under control" said Mihai Marcu, President and CEO of MedLife Group.*

*In this regard, we are starting a pilot testing project. We will test the presence of IgG and IgM antibodies in the case of medical professionals who are simultaneously tested by the RT PCR method to determine the exact stage of their immunization. We will process tests in parallel using the chemiluminescence method, the Elisa method and rapid tests, so both through fast methods and through high accuracy quantitative methods. Such an approach, RT PCR testing tripled by antibody testing by these methods, rapid but also quantitative, will determine whether rapid tests can be used extensively, thus we will determine whether MedLife medical staff already have antibodies, to be sure that these healthcare professionals are healthy, especially if we determine positive values regarding the presence of antibodies. This process is all the more effective as it is performed exclusively for the medical and auxiliary personnel who come in direct contact with the patient, permanent testing being recommended by both the WHO and the Romanian authorities on several occasions." said Mihai Marcu.*

According to studies, antibody testing has advantages: it offers details about the actual incidence of the disease, by identifying the people who have developed antibodies against the virus, and implies a minimum risk of infection of the laboratory personnel as testing is automatic. Conducting the MedLife pilot testing project will allow the company to identify in the coming weeks, on a relevant population of about 1000 people throughout the country and implicitly statistically, if indeed in Romania a greater number of people who have had contact with the virus without having symptoms are immunized.

*"We will start the internal research study in the field of immunity of the medical team at the end of this week and we hope that we will be able to make the preliminary results available to the general public by*

*the end of next week. As also mentioned, we will continue to open PCR laboratories to identify COVID 19. At the beginning of the crisis when MedLife did not have the capabilities for safe processing of Covid 19 samples, we now have a functional laboratory since two weeks ago, and on Thursday, April 16 , we will start testing in the second laboratory located in Sfântu Gheorghe, Covasna and we hope that by April 23, we will start the activity also in the third laboratory located in Timisoara, "said Mihai Marcu.*

In addition to this pilot testing project on the existence of antibodies, MedLife will also launch a Guide to Prevention and Best Practices in companies to reduce the risk of COVID 19 infection.

*"These days we are working on a Guide to Prevention and Best Practices to support Romanian companies in the COVID era. These guides will cover essential topics on the prevention and protection of medical and auxiliary personnel, from the rules of social and professional contact, personnel recalibration and filtering, awareness of the risks of contact with infected persons, to testing, circuit management, and resting of the personnel in this period" said Mihai Marcu.*

*"We strongly believe that infection with the new coronavirus can be overcome by strictly adhering to the rules and protocols in place. Since February 23, MedLife has introduced strict traffic rules in all its units, limited contact with patients to the minimum, reduced contact between employees and introduced the obligation to wear masks by patients and medical or support staff, filters upon entering the units, telephone filtering, statements on own responsibility, all these measures in order to determine the persons at risk of infection. This extremely rigorous process, scientifically coordinated together with the teams of epidemiologists and infections, has helped to avoid borderline situations. We have shown that a patient who omitted in her statement information regarding the suspected persons she came in contact with, contaminated after 8 days in MedLife Grivița maternity only one medical professional and no other patient, while in Arad maternity, in an area of the country with many infections, three positively detected medical staff did not further infect any other colleague and patient. Covid 19 is not unbeatable, preventive measures, protective equipment, ventilation systems, circuits and testing, all strictly applied, can significantly reduce the risk of contamination and make companies to be operational, even hospitals where contact is theoretically dangerous for patients especially with multidisciplinary medical problems", said Mihai Marcu.*

*"Furthermore, we work intensively on the basis of the 8 million laboratory results and investigations conducted on 650,000 subscribers to identify people at high risk for COVID 19 infection. Details about these personalized reports through which we can make available to the employers the lists of employees who present these risks will be communicated to each company that may or may not decide whether we can contact these persons in terms of GDPR. We focused in the first phase on subscribers who present cardiovascular and pulmonary risks, as well as those who have metabolic diseases in chronic stages" stated Mihai Marcu.*

*In addition to researchers' efforts to develop a specific disease treatment or vaccine, an important step in fight against SARS-CoV-2 is preventive testing and rapid identification of risks. We are the first company in Romania that systematically preventively tested medical staff and in direct contact with patients with important results. We introduced the mandatory temperature testing upon entering MedLife hospitals of all medical and support staff. Thus, we clearly identified that one of the people who showed up for work with temperature and then sent home was tested positive and two other medical staff with symptoms and who stayed home were subsequently found positive. We will continue to do this to become a model of best practice: how to do low risk business in full pandemic, how to get out of the pandemic by increasing sales and resuming business in good conditions. We will continue to take measures to support the community, Romanian companies and public health authorities in order to overcome this pandemic" said Mihai Marcu.*

*"We also need to consider the economy, Romania will not be able to stay closed forever, companies will have to resume activities and the state to revive the economy. At the same time, it is important not to consider that we are entering a relaxation stage. At this moment, quarantine and the recommendations of the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Internal Affairs are the most important measures for pandemic control and need to be strictly adhered to, the authorities being the only ones able to decide the appropriate moment for the resumption of business activity and implicitly for the revival of the economy" concluded Mihai Marcu.*