

## Laboratory-Led Company-Wide Screening Programs for Safe Back-to-Work Strategies During COVID-19 Pandemic

The uncertainty of the COVID-19 pandemic has left us all with more questions than answers; what is safe vs. not? Can I see friends and family? Is it safe to go into work? And although we still have many questions, insights, data and some answers are coming to light, in part due to work done by laboratorians and the subsequent strategic implementation of testing to enable us to ‘get back to normal’.

The economic impact shutting down businesses during the initial phases of the pandemic cannot be understated. Thus an multidisciplinary team at Dr. Suliman Al Habib Medical Group (HMG) involving infection control, hospital leadership, industrial business owners, and the clinical laboratory saw an opportunity to utilize insights and services from the clinical laboratory to help forward-thinking, health-focused companies seeking safe go back-to-work strategies for their business and employees. Their focus was on risk mitigation through activation of employee wide screening programs using polymerase chain reaction (PCR) and antibody testing. Their goals were to maximize productivity and employee safety while minimizing virus transmission and loss of work due to new infection and quarantines.

The services were offered to diverse companies, institutions, and sports centers and has enabled safe reopening, avoided lost labor and paid sick leave, with 79% of employees not infected nor in need of quarantine. Collective PCR and antibody testing ensured known viral status for 100% of employees, mandating strategic quarantine measures/procedures for infected individuals, while allowing safe return-to-work for all individuals without active infection.



For their forward-thinking efforts this integrated clinical care team from Dr. Suliman Al Habib Medical Group received the 2020 UNIVANTS of Healthcare Excellence award recognition of Achievement. Congratulations to Faisal Abdullah Al-Owaidi, *Laboratory Director*, Tarif Bizrah, *Business Development Manager*, Nasser Al-Huqbani, *Chief Executive Officer*, Abdullah Nasser Al-Jurayyan, *Consultant Immunologist, Infection Control*.

### KEY TAKEAWAYS

1. Laboratory insights are increasingly important during the COVID-19 pandemic.
2. Implementation of strategic testing strategies outside traditional testing, such as within companies, are key to ensure safe back to work efforts.
3. Integration across traditional and non-traditional clinical care teams enables pandemic innovation.