# [Poor will be eligible for free COVID-19 testing and treatment under AB-PMJAY](#)

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Testing and treatment for COVID-19 will be free of cost for Ayushman Bharat beneficiaries at private laboratories and empanelled hospitals, the National Health Authority (NHA) said on Saturday.

The NHA, which implements the national health insurance scheme, said this will strengthen the country's response to the novel coronavirus pandemic.

**Key Highlights**

- Testing and treatment of COVID-19 is already available for free in public facilities. Now, more than 50 crore citizens, eligible under the health assurance scheme will be able to avail free testing through private labs and treatment for COVID-19 in empanelled hospitals, the statement said.
- Hospitals empanelled under the Ayushman Bharat Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (AB-PMJAY) can use their authorised testing facilities or tie up with an authorised testing facility, the NHA said.
- The COVID-19 tests will be carried out as per protocols of the Indian Council for Medical Research (ICMR) and by private labs approved or registered by it, the authority said. Treatment of COVID-19 by private hospitals will be covered under the AB-PMJAY.
- This decision comes with the objective to increase the supply of testing and treatment facilities. This decision will also help attract more private sector players for providing testing and treatment for the coronavirus.
- As per ICMR guidelines for COVID-19 testing by private laboratories, the test is to be

conducted by a laboratory which has NABL accreditation for real-time polymerase chain reaction assay for a ribonucleic acid virus.

**SOURCE:***The Hindu, Business Standard*