

DATE:	2022 January 31
TO:	All Zones – All AHS Assessment Centres with POCT Abbott ID NOW COVID-19 Devices
FROM:	Alberta Precision Laboratories (APL) – POCT and Public Health Laboratory
RE:	APL POCT Sample Collection Changes for COVID-19 ID NOW Testing at Assessment Centres

PLEASE POST OR DISTRIBUTE AS WIDELY AS APPROPRIATE

Key Message

- Effective February 2, 2022, healthcare professionals/providers of the APL Point of Care Testing (POCT) Abbott ID NOW program for COVID-19 used at Assessment Centres will change their swab collection process
 - Only one swab will be collected for POCT ID NOW testing in this setting, with the same swab sent for variant testing if the result is positive
 - The results in this setting will now be reported as final (positive, negative, invalid)
 - The only clinical indications for ID NOW testing at the Assessment Centre are:
 - Any patient presenting with COVID-19 symptoms with onset of symptoms <7 days
 - Any patient presenting for Sotrovimab infusion or other COVID-19 therapies
- There is no change in process, clinical indications or reporting for other areas that test for COVID-19 with the Abbott ID NOW instrument (e.g. acute care, outbreak investigations, congregate living)
 - These areas continue to collect two swabs and confirm negative/invalid results with a molecular test in the laboratory, as sensitivity of the test in these populations is lower

Background

- Abbott ID NOW molecular testing instruments have shown a sensitivity of 94% for symptomatic individuals, which is very similar sensitivity to molecular testing in the laboratory
- The Omicron wave is placing significant pressures on laboratory molecular testing and turn-around-times

How this will impact you

- When COVID-19 testing is done within the APL POCT Abbott ID NOW program at Assessment Centres, staff will collect one swab for testing
 - If results are positive, the swab needs to be forwarded according to standard processes for variant testing
 - Negative and Invalid swabs will not be forwarded and may be discarded
- If staff pressures do not allow for POCT Abbott ID NOW testing, follow standard processes for lab molecular testing

Action Required

- Be aware of the amended procedures ([Provincial POCT Abbott ID NOW for COVID-19 Program](#)) for sample collection and result reporting at Assessment Centres
 - Communicate the changes to your clinical practice area

Inquiries and Feedback

- Dr. William Stokes, Medical Microbiologist, APL, william.stokes@aplabs.ca
- Dr. Byron Berenger, Medical Microbiologist, APL, byron.berenger@aplabs.ca

Calgary Zone	Central Zone	Edmonton Zone	North Zone	South Zone
POCT.Calgary@aplabs.ca	poc.centralzone@ahs.ca	poccertification@ahs.ca	pointofcare.northzone@ahs.ca	poc.southzone@ahs.ca

Approved by

- Dr. Allison Venner, Provincial POCT Medical Lead, APL
- Dr. Graham Tipples, Medical Scientific Director, Public Health Laboratory, APL