

DATE:	2022 February 10
TO:	Central Zone Physicians and Health Care Providers
FROM:	Clinical Biochemistry, South Sector, Alberta Precision Laboratories (APL)
RE:	Temporary Changes to Electrolyte Panel Test Availability in Central Zone

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Key Message

- As supplies are depleted, Total Carbon Dioxide (tCO₂) will not be routinely available as a part of the Electrolyte Panel at sites using an Abbott i-STAT as a primary chemistry analyzer and at sites using Vitros chemistry analyzers during downtime only.
- Supply shortages have caused the laboratory to change to testing cartridges that do not contain tCO₂ on the routine panel. This change also prevents reporting of the Anion Gap on site.
- STAT and Urgent orders will continue to be processed on site, however will not contain tCO₂ or Anion Gap results.
- For Sylvan Lake, Castor, Consort and Coronation - in order to receive a CO₂ result, physicians must order a Venous Blood Gas (VBG) panel. Anion Gaps may then be calculated manually.
- For CCMHBI an urgent tCO₂ can be requested by contacting laboratory staff. Samples will be sent to Ponoka Hospital and Care Centre.
- For Drumheller, Drayton Valley, Hanna, Innisfail, Lacombe, Olds, Ponoka, Rimbey, Rocky Mountain House, Stettler, Myron Thompson (Sundre), Three Hills and Wetaskiwin Hospitals and Care Centres, tCO₂ and Anion Gap will not be available during the main chemistry analyzer (Vitros) downtime only.
- Supply shortages are expected to last until April 2022. When cartridge availability is restored tCO₂ and Anion Gap reporting will resume.

Why this is Important

- In order to provide a complete electrolyte panel, separate orders for VBG and Electrolytes are required.
- Anion Gap and tCO₂ will not be reported on STAT and Urgent samples at sites using the i-STAT as a primary analyzer or during downtime of main chemistry analyzer at Vitros-equipped sites.

Action Required

- For Urgent or STAT requests requiring tCO₂ and Anion Gap to assess patients, order both a VBG and Electrolyte Panel.
- Delays in turnaround time are expected at this time as each component requires sample processing and testing.

Effective

- February 14, 2022

Inquiries and feedback may be directed to

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This bulletin has been reviewed and approved by

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