

DATE:	March 25, 2020
TO:	All Community Ordering Providers
FROM:	Alberta Precision Laboratories & DynaLIFE Medical Labs
RE:	Cessation of Routine Laboratory & Fecal Immunochemical Testing (FIT) Testing during COVID-19 Pandemic

Key Message:

- Alberta Precision Laboratories (APL) and DynaLIFE strongly recommend cessation of routine laboratory testing for stable community patients effective **immediately**.
- All **Fecal Immunochemical Testing (FIT)** will be suspended until further notice.
- Mobile Collection Services in the province will prioritize work and focus on patients with the highest medical needs.
- Both APL & DynaLIFE remain committed to performing tests necessary for immediate patient care.

Background:

- Alberta declared a public health emergency on March 17, 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. See <https://www.alberta.ca/assets/documents/covid-cmoh-public-health-emergency-declaration.pdf>
- Normal service expectations at **all** APL and DynaLIFE Patient Service/Care Centres and outpatient labs will not be sustainable as the COVID-19 pandemic progresses into the next phase.
- This is consistent with advice from the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Alberta that was communicated on March 23, 2020:

“It is CPSA’s expectation at this time that accredited facilities align with recommendations provided by the Chief Medical Officer of Health and Alberta Health Services. All diagnostic facilities and non-hospital surgical facilities are being advised not to engage in any procedures or patient visits that are not considered to be urgent in nature. All elective and non-urgent visits and procedures should be postponed. As per CPSA Standards of Practice, urgent means a situation where direct communication between Most Responsible Healthcare Providers (MRHP) is necessary to access care.”
- Mobile Collection Services will begin to defer monthly or quarterly blood collections enabling the deployment of staff to collect more acutely ill patients.
- Lab is anticipating an increase in staff impacts at Patient Service/Care Centres and outpatient laboratories, and may need to further reduce the number of Patient Service/Care Centres open or the hours of available service at certain locations.
- To reduce the risk of community transmission and adhere to Public Health recommendations for social distancing practices at all collection sites, resources must be focused on providing collection services only when medically required.
- Eliminating routine testing will allow APL and DynaLIFE staff to safely serve patients that require essential lab collections.

Action Required:

- Discontinue ordering of routine and non-essential tests immediately.
- Discontinue ordering FIT testing.
- Limit standing (recurring) orders to those which are medically required for patient management.
- Only order medically necessary testing vital to the patient’s immediate care.

Inquiries and feedback may be directed to:

Carolyn O'Hara, Chief Medical Laboratory Officer, APL
Carolyn.OHara@albertaprecisionlabs.ca

Ray Lai, Medical Director, DynaLIFE
rlai443309@me.com

This memorandum has been reviewed and approved by:

Tammy Hofer, Chief Operating Officer, Alberta Precision Laboratories
Jason Pincock, Chief Executive Officer, DynaLIFE Medical Labs