

DATE:	5 August 2025
TO:	Physicians and Clinicians in Alberta
FROM:	Alberta Precision Laboratories (APL) – Public Health Laboratory (ProvLab)
RE:	Changes to CSF Prion Disease Testing Panel (Creutzfeldt-Jacob Disease (CJD) Protein Screen)

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Key Message

- On August 1, 2025, the National Microbiology Lab (NML) will update its prion disease cerebrospinal fluid (CSF) test panel.
- Only the EP-QulC will be performed routinely.
- hTau will be available by request only.
- EP-QulC remains the most sensitive and specific antemortem test for sporadic prion diseases.

Background

- Prion disease CSF testing is performed at the National Microbiology Laboratory (NML).
- Previously, testing included a panel of three tests: EP-QulC, hTau, and 14-3-3 γ .
- EP-QulC (End-Point Quaking-Induced Conversion) remains the primary diagnostic test.
- What is changing:
 - NML is updating the national prion disease CSF test panel, effective August 1, 2025.
 - Only the EP-QulC test will be performed for routine testing.
 - The hTau test will be available by request only.
 - The 14-3-3 γ test will be discontinued.
- Why it is changing:
 - The EP-QulC assay has consistently shown superior sensitivity and specificity for detecting sporadic CJD from CSF, outperforming both other tests.
 - A nationwide study of NML CJD data from 2016–2024 confirmed the EP-QulC test's vastly superior sensitivity and specificity compared to hTau and 14-3-3 γ tests (Slota *et al.*, 2025).

Action Required

- As needed, update your area's internal protocols to reflect this change in testing.
- If testing for hTau testing is required when performing a CJD screen on CSF, please consult with the APL ProvLab Microbiologist/Virologist On-Call (MVOC) (<https://www.albertahealthservices.ca/assets/wf/lab/if-lab-contact-information.pdf>)

Additional Details

- The process for test ordering and submission remains unchanged.
- Hereditary prion diseases should still be assessed with a nucleic acid test on blood, not CSF.



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Inquiries and feedback may be directed to

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Approved by

- Dr. Graham Tipples, Medical-Scientific Director, APL - Public Health Laboratory

Additional Resources

- Slota, JA *et al.* (2025) [Diagnosis of Creutzfeldt-Jakob Disease in Canada: An Update on Cerebrospinal Fluid Testing from 2016 to 2024](#) *Can J Neurol Sci.* doi: 10.1017/cjn.2025.10088.
- National Microbiology Laboratory (NML) [Prion Disease CSF Test Panel](#)