

DATE:	31 March 2025
TO:	All Health Care Providers in Alberta
FROM:	Alberta Precision Laboratories (APL) Section of Microbiology
RE:	Discontinuation of some additional result notifications from non-critical specimens

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Key Messages

- Effective March 31, 2025, APL Microbiology will no longer provide phone or fax notification of some non-critical results (see list on page 2). Routine result reporting will continue (e.g., to Connect Care in-basket, Netcare, eDelivery to community Electronic Medical Records (EMRs)).
- APL will continue to provide critical result notification (e.g., positive blood or CSF cultures) by phone.

Background

- Microbiology laboratories in Alberta have provided additional notification of results by phone or fax to clinicians in addition to routine result reporting in two contexts:
 1. Critical results (e.g., positive blood cultures, CSF cultures, high-risk pathogens etc.)
 2. Some non-critical results for:
 - Infection, Prevention and Control (IPC) reasons (e.g., *C. difficile*)
 - Public Health reasons (e.g., enteric pathogens)
 - Organisms with emerging antimicrobial resistance patterns (e.g., MRSA, ESBL, VRE)
- Additional notifications of test results were not standardized across Alberta and consume significant clinical and lab resources.
- Due to real-time availability of results in Connect Care and Netcare, widespread adoption of other EMRs, and changes in the awareness or epidemiology of some organisms, these legacy processes provide little additional value to patient care.
- These changes have been reviewed by IPC, Public Health, as well as other clinical leadership.

How this will impact you

- Clinics, units, and health care providers will receive fewer phone calls and/or faxes for non-critical results over and above routine result reporting.
- Critical results will continue to be phoned on a 24/7 basis.

Action Required

- Review the list on page 2.
- Continue to review all lab results in a timely fashion.
- Ensure there are processes for transferring result reviews and that services not operating 24/7 have designated after-hours coverage.



List of Discontinued Additional Notifications of Microbiology Results:

(note that not all zones are currently receiving additional notifications for all these results)

- antimicrobial susceptibility results, for organisms isolated from cerebrospinal fluid and blood cultures (Gram stains and organism identifications will continue to be notified as critical results)
- *C. difficile*
- enteric bacterial stool pathogens (e.g. *Salmonella*) except for Shiga toxin-producing *E. coli*, *Vibrio cholera*, and *Salmonella* Typhi/Paratyphi
- enteric parasitic stool pathogens (e.g. *Giardia*, *Taenia* spp.)
- extended spectrum beta-lactamase (ESBL)-producing organisms, isolated from non-sterile specimen
- Group A *Streptococcus*, isolated from the vagina or cervix
- lower respiratory tract Gram stains, when Gram-positive cocci and white blood cells are observed
- MRSA, isolated from a non-sterile specimen or for the first time from a screening specimen
- *N. gonorrhoeae*, *C. trachomatis*, *T. vaginalis*, detected or isolated from 12 to 15-year-olds
- negative Gram stain or cryptococcal antigen test on a cerebrospinal fluid
- SARS-CoV-2, Influenza, and RSV, detected from on-site hospital testing
- VRE, isolated from a non-sterile specimen or for the first time from a screening specimen

Questions/Concerns

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Approved by

- Dr. Carolyn O'Hara, Interim Chief Medical Laboratory Officer, APL