

<b>DATE:</b>	27 May 2024
<b>TO:</b>	South Zone Physicians, Nurses, and Laboratory Staff
<b>FROM:</b>	APL South Zone Laboratory Services
<b>RE:</b>	<b>Appropriate Utilization of the Fecal Immunochemical Test (FIT) for Colorectal Cancer Screening and a Reminder of the Discontinuation of the Guaiac Fecal Occult Blood Test (gFOBT) in Community Patients</b>

---

## PLEASE POST OR DISTRIBUTE AS WIDELY AS APPROPRIATE

---

### Key Message

- The guaiac Fecal Occult Blood Test (gFOBT) samples that are dropped off at rural acute care sites will be routed to the nearest regional site (Chinook Regional Hospital – Lethbridge; Medicine Hat Regional Hospital – Medicine Hat) for testing.

### Background

- In November 2013, the Fecal Immunochemical Test (FIT) replaced the gFOBT and average-risk screening colonoscopy as the primary screening modality for colorectal cancer (CRC) in average risk individuals. The FIT is superior to the gFOBT for several reasons: better clinical performance, higher sensitivity, and simplified sampling process for the individual.
- A Laboratory Bulletin was circulated in November 2014 informing Physicians and Nursing staff of the changes to the screening test for CRC in community patients. This bulletin also outlines the patient population in which the FIT is considered clinically appropriate.

<https://www.albertahealthservices.ca/assets/wf/lab/wf-lab-bulletin-fit-discontinuation-of-fobt.pdf>

### How this will impact you

- If ordered, gFOBT testing will only be completed at regional hospital sites. This routing may lead to an increase in result turnaround time.

### Action Required

- Referral testing for gFOBT should be discontinued. The FIT should only be used for CRC screening in the appropriate patient population. Patients with signs or symptoms indicating possible gastrointestinal pathology should be investigated and referred for consultation.

**Effective**      **Immediately**

### Questions/Concerns

- Shelley Duncan, Laboratory Manager, Chinook Regional Hospital [Shelley.Duncan@aplabs.ca](mailto:Shelley.Duncan@aplabs.ca)
- Madisen Longley, Laboratory manager, medicine Hat Regional Hospital [Madisen.Longley@aplabs.ca](mailto:Madisen.Longley@aplabs.ca)
- Tammy Kaatz, Laboratory Manager, Sout Zone Rural [Tammy.Kaatz@aplabs.ca](mailto:Tammy.Kaatz@aplabs.ca)

### Approved by

- Dr. Heather Paul, Clinical Biochemist & South Sector POCT Medical Lead, APL
- Dr. Allison Venner, Section Chief Clinical Biochemistry South Sector, APL
- Dr. Krishna Narra, Regional Laboratory Medicine Site Chief, Chinook Regional Hospital, APL

*Effective September 1, 2023, APL has become the sole provider of all public lab services in Alberta. As a result, community lab services formally provided by DynaLIFE Medical Labs will become the responsibility of Alberta Precision Labs (APL). This change impacts all zones.*