ALBERTA PRECISION LABORATORIES

Leaders in Laboratory Medicine

Laboratory Bulletin

Date: December 15, 2020

To: All Sites Live on Connect Care

From: Alberta Precision Laboratories (APL) – Public Health Laboratory

Re: New Connect Care Orders for COVID-19 and Other Respiratory Virus Tests

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Key messages

- Starting December 17, 2020, all COVID-19 and other respiratory virus orders will be placed using the "Respiratory Infection (inc. COVID-19) NAT" smart group. In addition to the routine COVID-19 NAT and respiratory pathogen panel (RPP), the smart group includes three new orders (Rapid COVID-19, RSV and Influenza A/B NAT, and COVID-19 and Influenza NAT panel).
- COVID-19 and RPP orders will no longer be orderable outside this smart group.
- The smart group will guide the user to order the appropriate test based on patient admission status and symptoms (see Table 1 for more details).
- RPP testing is not indicated in all patients presenting with influenza-like illness (ILI). Provincial clinical criteria for ordering the RPP must be met for testing to be performed (see Table 1 for summary).
- Infection prevention & control (IPC) precautions continue to be based symptoms and risk assessment. **Test results should not be used to discontinue IPC precautions in symptomatic or high-risk patients.**

Background

COVID-19 and other respiratory virus orders in Connect Care are being changed to incorporate faster COVID-19 testing for inpatients, influenza testing, and to improve lab utilization. New orders for admitted patients or those being admitted will allow expediting testing for COVID-19 and influenza. Additionally, admitted/to be admitted patients with influenza-like illness (ILI) will have access to expedited influenza and RSV testing. RPP can be ordered when ILI is present AND specific clinical criteria are met. The Alberta Public Health laboratory has also introduced a new COVID-19 and influenza PCR test which will be available for outpatients and patients to be discharged from the emergency room and hospital with ILI. The turnaround times (from collection to result) are expected to be 12-24h for the rapid tests (Rapid COVID-19 and RSV and Influenza NAT) and 24-48h for routine tests (COVID-19 NAT, COVID-19 and Influenza NAT Panel, and Respiratory pathogen NAT panel). These turnaround times are subject to change. Refer to the recent "**COVID-19 and other Respiratory Virus Testing Changes"** laboratory bulletin for further information on the new testing algorithm. A summary can be found in Table 1.

Table 1. COVID-19, influenza and other respiratory virus testing criteria.

Patient Status	Symptoms	Test(s) Available	Rapid or Routine
Admitted or to be admitted	Influenza-like illness (ILI) symptoms	Rapid COVID-19* + RSV and Influenza NAT	Rapid
	Other COVID-19 symptoms without ILI	Rapid COVID-19*	Rapid
	Asymptomatic: No COVID-19 or ILI symptoms	**Outbreak/Pre-transplant:** Rapid COVID-19*	Rapid
		Other: COVID-19 NAT	Routine
Outpatient or to be discharged	Influenza-like illness (ILI) symptoms	COVID-19 and Influenza NAT Panel	Routine
	Other COVID-19 symptoms without ILI	COVID-19 NAT	Routine
	Asymptomatic: No COVID-19 or ILI symptoms	COVID-19 NAT	Routine

Any	Respiratory Pathogen Panel (RPP) criteria (must be selected for RPP to be performed):
	· Acute flaccid paralysis
	· Myocarditis/pericarditis
	· ILI symptoms and:
	  · Severely immunocompromised**
	  · Critical respiratory failure
	  · Outbreak investigation
		Respiratory pathogen panel NAT (RPP)	Routine

*Rapid COVID-19 refers to prioritized testing performed on several different COVID-19 NAT platforms used in the laboratory. It does not refer to a specific assay or point-of-care testing.
**Severely immunocompromised includes post-transplant patients and those on chemotherapy and immunosuppressive therapy (more examples can be found in References).

Actions required

- To order nucleic acid testing (eg, PCR) for COVID-19, influenza or other respiratory viruses, use the smart group "Respiratory Infection (inc. COVID-19) NAT".
- Select whether the patient is admitted/to be admitted or outpatient/to be discharged. "To be discharged" includes patients in the emergency room who are not going to be admitted to hospital.
- Select ONE symptom category:
    1. Influenza-like illness (ILI) symptoms – if they have ILI symptoms
    2. Other COVID-19 symptoms without ILI – if they do not have ILI symptoms, but have gastrointestinal or expanded COVID-19 symptoms.
    3. Asymptomatic: No COVID-19 or ILI symptoms
- The smart group will automatically select the appropriate order based on the patient status and symptom category based on Table 1.

- Order each test selected and indicate the specimen type. **Ensure that the same specimen type is selected for each test.**
- If RPP testing is indicated, select that order and indicate which RPP criteria are met (mandatory question).
- Answers to all questions will be automatically filled based on the patient encounter.
- Facility and specialty reference lists and order sets that have COVID-19 NAT and/or the RPP will have these orders replaced with the smart group.
- Personalized preference lists and order sets (favorited items) with COVID-19 NAT and/or RPP will need to be manually updated by each user individually.
- If RPP testing is needed for a patient who does not fulfill the RPP testing criteria, consult the ProvLab Virologist on-call (VOC) to arrange for testing prior to sample collection (780-407-8822).
- Refer to the "COVID-19 Workflows" in the Connect Care Clinician Manual for more detailed information on ordering

References

- IPC COVID-19 Guidelines: https://www.albertahealthservices.ca/frm-21624.pdf
- COVID-19 and Other Respiratory Virus Testing Changes laboratory bulletin: https://www.albertahealthservices.ca/assets/wf/lab/if-lab-hp-bulletin-covid-19-and-other-respiratory-virus-testing-changes.pdf
- List of immunocompromised conditions: https://www.albertahealthservices.ca/assets/healthinfo/ipc/hi-ipc-immunocompromised-patients.pdf

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