

DATE:	18 September 2023
TO:	Edmonton Zone hospital physicians and nurses
FROM:	Alberta Precision Laboratories, Clinical Biochemistry
RE:	Discontinuation of the Rapid Antigen RSV Screen

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Key Message

- Effective Monday September 18 2023, the Rapid Antigen RSV Screen will be discontinued. This involves the following hospital sites: Royal Alexandra, Grey Nuns, Misericordia, Sturgeon, Leduc, Northeast, Strathcona, and Westview.
- The Rapid RSV and Influenza Nucleic Acid Test (NAT) panel is now available and will replace antigen screening. The NAT panel uses polymerase chain reaction (PCR) technology, which is far superior than antigen methods.

Background

- Rapid Antigen RSV screening has been historically used only in Edmonton Zone.
- Rapid PCR testing was recently implemented at certain hospital sites across the province for detection of respiratory viruses ([see bulletin from January 2023](#) and Table 1).
- Smaller sites that do not perform PCR testing will refer samples to ProVLab North in Edmonton (Table 1). Referral to ProVLab also includes sites that previously did not perform rapid antigen screening.
- For sites that have PCR testing available in the laboratory, criteria for onsite testing is patients being admitted to hospital units and pre-transplantation testing. All other ER or inpatient orders will be referred to ProVLab.
- PCR testing is far superior to antigen testing for RSV.

Table 1. Testing sites for rapid antigen RSV and replacement with rapid PCR.

Hospital site	Onsite PCR testing	Referral location for PCR
Royal Alexandra	Yes	Not applicable
Grey Nuns	Yes	Not applicable
Misericordia	Yes	Not applicable
Sturgeon	Yes	Not applicable
Leduc	No	ProVLab North
Northeast	No	ProVLab North
Strathcona	No	ProVLab North
Westview	No	ProVLab North

Action Required

- Be aware that the Rapid Antigen RSV Screen is no longer available, and is replaced by better a methodology using PCR testing.



Questions/Concerns

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Approved by

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