

DATE:	2022 May 2
TO:	North Zone Clinicians
FROM:	Alberta Precision Laboratories (APL) - Public Health Laboratory
RE:	New Test Criteria for Sacred Heart Community Health Services for Acute Care On-site ID NOW COVID-19 Testing

PLEASE POST OR DISTRIBUTE AS WIDELY AS APPROPRIATE

Key Message

- This message applies to ID NOW COVID-19 testing at a Sacred Heart Community Health Services in North Zone. It DOES NOT apply to assessment centres or other sites performing the ID NOW test.
- On-site Abbott ID NOW COVID-19 testing will be available at McLennan Sacred Heart Community Health Services
- Eligibility for testing includes all hospital/ED patients with core/ILI and expanded COVID-19 symptoms regardless of the time since symptom onset.
- Results will be reported within an hour of receipt at the lab.
- **A negative ID NOW test cannot be used to rule out infection.** All negative ID NOW results will be confirmed using a COVID-19 PCR and will be reported as "Result to follow."
- Confirmatory testing for positives is not needed.
- Infection prevention & control (IPC) precautions continue to be based on symptoms and risk assessment (see *References*). **Test results should not be used to discontinue IPC precautions in symptomatic or high-risk patients.**
- Testing on the ID NOW is only available during normal laboratory operating hours. Call-back requests for ID NOW testing will not be accepted.

Actions required

- In Connect Care/EPIC, respiratory virus testing, including rapid COVID-19, should be ordered using the **"Respiratory Infection (inc. COVID-19) NAT" smart group. You must select the "COVID-19 ID NOW" order if indicated.**
- If ID NOW testing is indicated (COVID-19 symptoms present), place an order for COVID-19 testing, inform the lab staff, and retrieve the ID NOW collection kit from the laboratory.
- **Collect two swabs:**
 1. An ID NOW throat swab in an empty sterile container.
 2. A standard nasopharyngeal (NP) swab in UTM: used for confirmatory testing of negative ID NOW results and other tests (ie. RPP or influenza/RSV).
 - The ID NOW swab must be received in the laboratory within 30 minutes of collection.
 - Results will be reported via Connect Care and Netcare. Positives will also be reported by phone.
 - Because of lower sensitivity than PCR (89.5%) and the severe consequences of missing a positive case in acute care settings, **negative results will be sent by the laboratory for confirmation with a COVID-19 PCR.**



- If testing for COVID-19 is required on other specimens such as a bronchoalveolar lavage (BAL), endotracheal tube (ETT) aspirate, or NP aspirate, testing will be referred to the Public Health Laboratory (ProvLab) or a regional referral laboratory for COVID-19 PCR.
- Other testing for COVID-19 and other respiratory viruses will continue to be performed at ProvLab or a regional referral laboratory.

Table 1. COVID-19 Testing for Sites with ID NOW Available

Patient Status	Symptoms	Test(s) Available*	Testing Site**
ED/Hospitalized	COVID-19 symptoms	COVID-19 ID NOW + confirmation of negatives with a COVID-19 PCR	ID NOW: On-Site Negative Confirmation: Regional Lab
	No COVID-19 symptoms	Outbreak: Rapid COVID-19	Regional Lab
		Other: COVID-19 PCR	ProvLab
Outpatient	ILI symptoms	COVID-19 (+ influenza) NAT	ProvLab
	COVID-19 symptoms	COVID-19 PCR	ProvLab
	No COVID-19 symptoms	COVID-19 PCR	ProvLab

*Rapid COVID-19 refers to prioritized PCR testing performed on several different COVID-19 PCR platforms used in the laboratory. It does not refer to a specific assay or point-of-care testing. Refer to the recent COVID-19 and other respiratory virus bulletins for testing of other viruses (see references).

**In some regions the “regional lab” means ProvLab.

References

- IPC COVID-19 Guidelines: <https://www.albertahealthservices.ca/frm-21624.pdf>
- COVID-19 and other respiratory testing: <https://www.albertahealthservices.ca/assets/wf/lab/if-lab-hp-bulletin-covid-19-and-other-respiratory-virus-testing-changes.pdf>

Inquiries and feedback may be directed to

- Your local consulting pathologist or microbiologist.
- General inquiries about the provincial Abbott ID NOW implementation at acute care sites can be directed to: Dr. Byron Berenger, Medical Microbiologist, APL, Byron.Berenger@aplabs.ca

Approved by

- Dr. Michael Mengel, North Sector Medical Director, APL