



Date: January 14, 2021
To: Clinicians and Nursing Units in Barrhead, Brooks, Camrose, Castor, Cardston, Cold Lake, Coronation, Drayton Valley, Drumheller, Edson, Elk Point, High Prairie, Hinton, Lac La Biche, Oyen, Peace River, Pincher Creek, Provost, Rocky Mountain House, Two Hills, St. Paul, Wabasca, Wainwright, Westlock, Wetaskiwin, Vegreville
From: Alberta Precision Laboratories (APL) – Public Health Laboratory
Re: On-site COVID-19 Testing with the ID NOW

PLEASE POST OR DISTRIBUTE AS WIDELY AS APPROPRIATE

Key Message:

- Effective January 19, 2021, on-site COVID-19 testing with the Abbott ID NOW test will be available at the following hospital centres:
 - South Zone: Brooks, Cardston, Oyen, Pincher Creek
 - Central Zone: Camrose, Castor, Coronation, Drayton Valley, Drumheller, Provost, Rocky Mountain House, Two Hills, Wainwright, Wetaskiwin, Vegreville
 - North Zone: Barrhead, Cold Lake, Edson, Elk Point, High Prairie, Hinton, Lac La Biche, Peace River, St. Paul, Wabasca, Westlock
- ID NOW testing (an isothermal nucleic acid test) will be available for ED/hospitalized patients with influenza-like illness (ILI) or other COVID-19 symptoms, within 7 days of symptom onset (Table 1).
- Results will be reported within an hour of receipt at the lab.
- **A negative ID NOW test cannot be used to rule out infection.** Until further notice, 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.

Action Required:

- See Table 1 for the modified COVID-19 test for sites with ID NOW
- In Meditech, respiratory virus testing, including rapid COVID-19, should be ordered using **VIROV1**. Ensure that the ordering staff have the information (symptoms and date of onset) to place the order accurately.
- If ID NOW testing is indicated (<7 days from COVID-19 symptom onset), 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 Meditech and Netcare. Positives will also be reported by phone.
- Because of low sensitivity (estimated 80-90%), **negative results must be confirmed by a COVID-19 PCR.** APL is conducting a prospective evaluation of the assay to determine if confirmation of negatives is required.



- If testing for COVID-19 is required on other specimens such as 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	Duration	Symptoms	Test(s) Available*	Testing Site**
ED/Hospitalized	≤7 days	ILI or other COVID-19 symptoms	COVID-19 ID NOW	On-Site
		No COVID-19 symptoms	Outbreak: Rapid COVID-19 Other: COVID-19 PCR	Regional Lab ProvLab
	>7 days	ILI or other COVID-19 symptoms	Rapid COVID-19	Regional Lab
		No COVID-19 symptoms	COVID-19 PCR	ProvLab
Outpatient	any	ILI	COVID-19 (+ influenza) NAT	ProvLab
		Other 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 (References).

**In some regions the “regional lab” may be ProvLab.

References:

- IPC COVID-19 Guidelines: <https://www.albertahealthservices.ca/frm-21624.pdf>
- Updates to COVID-19 and respiratory virus testing (Emergency to be discharged has been since added as criterion for rapid COVID-19 testing in North, Central and South Zones):
 - Provincial: <https://www.albertahealthservices.ca/assets/wf/lab/if-lab-hp-bulletin-covid-19-and-other-respiratory-virus-testing-changes.pdf>
 - North Zone: <https://www.albertahealthservices.ca/assets/wf/lab/if-lab-hp-bulletin-updates-to-covid-19-and-respiratory-virus-testing-in-north-zone.pdf>
 - Central/South Zone: <https://www.albertahealthservices.ca/assets/wf/lab/if-lab-hp-bulletin-changes-to-respiratory-viral-testing-covid-19-influenza-rsv-and-respiratory-pathogen-panel-rpp-cz-sz.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. Graham Tipples, Medical Scientific Director, Public Health, APL
- Dr. Michael Mengel, North Sector Medical Director, APL
- Dr. Hallgrimur Benediktson, South Sector Medical Director, APL