

DATE:	19 January 2023
TO:	Calgary and Edmonton Hospitals (ACH, FMC, PLC, RGH, SHC & GNH, MCH, RAH, SCH, UAH)
FROM:	Alberta Precision Laboratories (APL) Microbiology and Public Health Laboratory (ProvLab)
RE:	On-Site Rapid COVID-19, Influenza A, Influenza B, and RSV PCR

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Key Message

- Rapid COVID-19, Influenza A/ B, and RSV polymerase chain reaction (PCR) will be performed in Calgary and Edmonton hospital-based laboratories. This will improve the turnaround time for this testing.
- On-site PCR will be done for symptomatic inpatients and emergency department (ED) patients likely to be admitted (some sites may have a phased approach – see appendix). All other inpatients or ED patients will have rapid PCR done at either ProvLab North or ProvLab South. Pre-transplant testing will be done on-site.
- Edmonton sites will go-live by January 23 (UAH, GNH, MCH, and SCH). The RAH will go-live for symptomatic ED patients to be admitted only until further notice (see appendix).
- Calgary sites will go-live by January 30 (FMC, RGH, SHC). The ACH and PLC will go-live January 30 for only symptomatic ED patients likely to be admitted to hospital until Connect Care launch 6 (May 6, 2023).
- It is important to answer the questions accurately when ordering in order to determine the appropriate testing site.

Background

- Rapid COVID-19 PCR and Rapid Influenza A/B and RSV PCR are currently done for these sites at one of the two Alberta ProvLab locations. On-site testing will improve the turnaround time as transporting specimens to a central laboratory will not be required. It has also been demonstrated to improve the utilization of health care resources, infection control measures, and appropriateness of antiviral therapies such as oseltamavir.
- On-site testing will be done using the Cepheid Xpert Xpress SARS-CoV-2 or Xpert Xpress SARS-CoV-2/Flu/RSV Plus assays. These tests are currently in use for centralized testing and on-site testing in regional hospital labs and has equivalent sensitivity/specificity as other PCR tests and the respiratory pathogen panel (RPP) assay. The SARS-CoV-2/Flu/RSV assay is only validated for nasopharyngeal (NP) swabs and NP aspirates; other samples with this testing requested will be performed on the RPP in ProvLab.
- Rapid influenza A/B and RSV PCR is tested on the same panel as COVID-19. As a result, if only rapid influenza A/B and RSV PCR testing is ordered it will result in COVID-19 PCR report being issued as well.

Action Required

- Ordering of these tests will be done using current processes in EPIC (Connect Care), Sunrise Clinical Manager, or manual requisition.
- There is no change to the collection of samples. Collect swabs or NP aspirates as you are today. The same tube can be used for RPP if patient criteria are met.
- See the appendix on page 2 for site-specific information.

Inquiries and Feedback

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Approved by

- Dr. Michael Mengel, North Sector Medical Director, APL
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APPENDIX: Site-specific information

EDMONTON

University of Alberta Hospital (including Stollery Children's Hospital) &

Sturgeon Community Hospital: Continue using the "Respiratory Infection (inc. COVID-19)" smart group to order respiratory virus testing. Samples will route based on the patient status and symptoms selected.

Grey Nun's Hospital & Misericordia Community Hospital: Continue using the [COVID-19 and other respiratory viruses requisition](#). You MUST select one option in the "Specify test" and "Clinical History" sections (indicate symptoms and if hospital patient or pending admission). If information is not included, it will delay testing. If RPP testing is indicated select the criteria met for testing.

Royal Alexandra Hospital: Until further notice testing will only include those who currently qualify for ID NOW testing. Continue to select ID NOW testing in the "Respiratory Infection (inc. COVID-19)" smart group if criteria for ID NOW testing is met (symptomatic ED patient likely to be admitted). Do not collect the swab in an empty container. Only one swab in universal transport media needs to be collected.

CALGARY

Alberta Children's Hospital & Peter Lougheed Hospital: Continue using the "Respiratory Infection (inc. COVID-19)" smart group to order respiratory virus testing. If the patient is symptomatic and likely to be admitted from ED, mark an "X" with black marker on the top of the tube cap.

Foothills Medical Centre: Continue using the "Respiratory Infection (inc. COVID-19)" smart group to order respiratory virus testing. Samples will route based on the patient status and symptoms selected.

Rockyview General Hospital & South Health Campus: Continue using the Viral Respiratory Infection order set on SCM and answer the appropriate questions. The order set will select the appropriate COVID-19 order based on the answers to the questions. If on-site testing is indicated, the order set will select "COVID-19 Inpatient;" if on-site testing is not indicated, the order set will select "COVID-19 routine" and the sample will route to ProvLab for rapid PCR. If Flu/RSV testing is indicated, you must select "Influenza and RSV (Inpatient)" if inpatient/on-site testing criteria are met. Select "COVID-19 and influenza" if COVID-19 routine/central rapid PCR testing criteria are met (RSV will be tested). If RPP testing is indicated, select the required criteria for testing.