



Date: December 2, 2020
To: All Bonnyville Health Care Providers
From: Alberta Precision Laboratories (APL) – Public Health Laboratory and Bonnyville Laboratory
Re: On-site Rapid testing for COVID-19 at Bonnyville Health Centre

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Key messages

- On-site testing for COVID-19 using the Abbott ID NOW test will be available at the Bonnyville Health Centre for a clinical pilot beginning December 4th for patients admitted or pending admission to hospital with influenza-like illness symptoms or other non-ILI COVID-19 symptoms.
- See “**Actions required**” for important instructions on how to order, collect, and interpret results.
- Other testing for COVID-19 will continue to be performed at the Alberta Public Health Laboratory (ProvLab).
- Activating and discontinuing infection prevention & control (IPC) precautions continue to be based on symptoms and risk assessment (see “References” for guidelines). **Test results should not be used to discontinue infection prevention & control (IPC) precautions in symptomatic or high-risk patients.**

Background

To improve access to COVID-19 testing and decrease turnaround times in rural Alberta, Alberta Health Services (AHS) and Alberta Precision Laboratories (APL) are deploying the Abbott ID NOW isothermal nucleic acid amplification test in the Bonnyville Health Centre laboratory. The Bonnyville clinical pilot will be used to determine operational feasibility and sustainability for other similar sites throughout Alberta. The test allows for rapid detection of SARS-CoV-2 and is Health Canada approved for a throat swab from symptomatic patients tested within 7 days of symptom onset and within one hour of collection. An AHS/APL validation of throat swabs tested on the ID NOW demonstrated a 98% sensitivity and 100% specificity in this group of patients. This validation was done on primarily community patients in a controlled environment isolated at home. As such, further validation will be performed to determine the sensitivity in other populations and while implemented in the “real world”. At this time, the laboratory is recommending for the Bonnyville pilot that all negative ID NOW results be confirmed with a COVID-19 PCR done at a centralized location (ie. the Alberta Public Health Laboratory (ProvLab)). The ID NOW is not validated for asymptomatic testing and should therefore NOT be used for asymptomatic testing. The performance of this test in this population is likely inferior to standard PCR testing for COVID-19.

Actions required

On-site COVID-19 testing is ONLY indicated for patients admitted/pending admission with COVID-19 symptoms (influenza-like illness symptoms or other COVID-19 symptoms).



- Refer to the recent “**Updates to COVID-19 and respiratory virus testing in North Zone Lab Bulletin**” for the new testing algorithm (see below for hyperlink). The ID NOW will be done in clinical situations where the on-site/local lab COVID-19 testing is indicated.
- In Meditech, COVID-19 (on-site and off-site), influenza, and RPP, should be ordered through **VIROV1**.
- To order VIROV1, the following information about the patient is required:
 1. **Admission status:** hospital inpatient/being admitted OR outpatient/being discharged
 2. **Symptom:** ILI symptoms, other COVID-19 symptoms or neither.
 3. **RPP criteria met (if applicable)**
 4. **Source:** Although a throat and NP swab will be collected for on-site ID NOW testing, select NP swab in Meditech when ID NOW testing is indicated.
 5. **Answer mandatory question (for symptomatic testing):** “Indicate how many days since symptom onset?”
 6. Ensure that staff ordering the test on Meditech are provided with the above information during the ordering process, as a complete and accurate requisition is needed by the laboratory to appropriately triage testing.
- **IF** the patient meets criteria for on-site ID NOW testing, place the order, inform the lab staff and retrieve the ID NOW collection kit from the laboratory.
- **COLLECT TWO SWABS**
 1. A standard NP swab in UTM- used for confirmatory testing of the ID NOW result and other tests (ie. RPP or influenza).
 2. An ID NOW throat swab into an empty sterile container.
- Results will be reported via Meditech and Netcare and by phone call from the laboratory if positive.
- **For the purpose of the clinical pilot, a negative ID NOW test cannot be used to rule out infection.** All negative ID NOW results will be confirmed using the COVID-19 NAT at ProvLab. DO NOT discontinue IPC precautions based on a negative ID NOW result.
- Negative ID NOW results will be reported with the comment “This test cannot rule out COVID-19 infection. Confirmatory testing required. See separate COVID-19 nucleic acid test result.”
- A positive ID NOW result does not need confirmation and can be considered a true positive.
- If testing for COVID-19 is required on other specimens such as BAL, ETT, or NP aspirate, testing will be referred to ProvLab.

References

- IPC COVID-19 Guidelines: <https://www.albertahealthservices.ca/frm-21624.pdf>
- Updates to COVID-19 and respiratory virus testing in North Zone Lab Bulletin: <https://www.albertahealthservices.ca/assets/wf/lab/if-lab-hp-bulletin-updates-to-covid-19-and-respiratory-virus-testing-in-north-zone.pdf>



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