

DATE:	2021 May 31
TO:	Former East Central Health Region, Physicians, Nurses, Hospital Unit Locations
FROM:	Alberta Precision Laboratories (APL), North Sector
RE:	Rapid COVID-19 Testing of ER and Inpatients in former East Central Region

PLEASE POST OR DISTRIBUTE AS WIDELY AS APPROPRIATE

Key Message

- Effective **June 1, 2021**, COVID-19 testing on specimens submitted from **ER and hospital inpatients** in former East Central Zone Sites will be referred to the Public Health Laboratory in Edmonton (PLNA) for rapid testing using the Simplexa® COVID-19 Direct) or APTIMA® SARS-CoV2 nucleic acid tests (NAT)).
- On site testing using the ID Now is also still available at acute care facilities according to previously defined criteria (<https://www.albertahealthservices.ca/assets/wf/lab/if-lab-hp-bulletin-new-test-criteria-and-locations-for-acute-care-on-site-id-now-covid-19-testing.pdf>)
 - Samples negative by ID Now will be referred for confirmation to PLNA as above
- Results will be available within 6 hours of receipt at the PLNA laboratory.
 - Specimen transport frequency will remain unchanged.
 - Results turnaround times are expected to improve.
- Acceptable specimens include throat or nasopharyngeal swabs (in Universal Transport Media or Saline), nasopharyngeal aspirates, endotracheal tube aspirates, and bronchoalveolar lavages.

Action Required

- No change or action required.
- COVID-19 and other viral testing should continue to be ordered as VIROV1 in MediTech.
- All results will still be available in Netcare. Results will not be viewable in the East Central Meditech ring.
- Positive results will continue to be called to the submitting location.
- Contact & droplet precautions should only be discontinued in accordance with Infection Prevention & Control (IP&C) guidelines or consultation, and should take into account the patient's clinical and radiological findings.

Inquiries and feedback may be directed to

- Maria Falsetti, Clinical Supervisor, PLNA, 780-407-8290, maria.falsetti@aplabs.ca
- Michael Groeschel, MD, Medical Microbiology, 403-770-3338, michael.groeschel@aplabs.ca
- Dr. Nathan Zelyas, Medical Microbiologist, APL – Public Health Laboratory, nathan.zelyas@aplabs.ca

This bulletin has been reviewed and approved by

- Dr. Michael Mengel, North Sector Medical Director, APL Chair Department of Laboratory Medicine and Pathology, University of Alberta