

<b>DATE:</b>	29 April 2024
<b>TO:</b>	All Health Care Providers Ordering Tests in Connect Care
<b>FROM:</b>	Alberta Precision Laboratories
<b>RE:</b>	<b>Respiratory Viral Infection Ordering Changes</b>

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## PLEASE POST OR DISTRIBUTE AS WIDELY AS APPROPRIATE

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### Key Message

- Effective May 13, 2024, ordering of rapid COVID-19 PCR, Influenza and RSV NAT (rapid Flu/RSV PCR), and the respiratory pathogen panel (RPP) will be changed in Connect Care to improve test utilization and simplify the ordering process.
- It is important for the sustainability of the rapid COVID and rapid Flu/RSV PCR testing program that clinicians indicate the reason for testing and patient location/likely disposition appropriate to the clinical context.
- The order name in Connect Care will continue to be “Respiratory Infection (inc. COVID-19 NAT)”.
- To place an order for the RPP you must now indicate the RPP criteria met.
- Rapid Influenza and RSV NAT will no longer be available during the summer months (June 1 to September 30-subject to change based on virus activity) due to low or absent circulation of these viruses. Influenza and RSV will continue to be orderable using the respiratory pathogen panel (RPP), provided criteria are indicated for testing.
- Rapid COVID-19 PCR will still be available throughout the year.

### Action Required

- To order these tests, indicate the reason for testing (symptomatic, infection control screen or pre-transplant testing), the patient location (aka likely disposition) and testing required. Rapid COVID-19 testing will be automatically selected by default. You must select Flu/RSV or RPP testing if indicated.
- A nasopharyngeal swab will be the default specimen source/type. It must be changed if another source/type is collected (e.g. ETT aspirate, NP aspirate).
- For ED and hospitalized patients, indicate if the patient is “Admitted or ED patient likely to be admitted” or “ED patient to be discharged”. If you think the patient is likely to be discharged from ED, then select the latter.
- When screening of contacts or wards for COVID-19 is requested by infection control or public health, select the reason for testing as “Outbreak screen requested by infection control”.
- The new ordering format will allow users to order these tests using Haiku.
- If “Respiratory infection (inc. COVID-19 NAT)” is on your personal preference list, you will need to add it again as the old version will be removed on the effective date. Other preference lists and order sets will be updated without action from their owners.
- Review the “Respiratory Infection NAT Order Tip Sheet” in the COVID-19 section of the Emergency, Medicine Specialties, Critical Care Specialties CMIO Learning Home Dashboards.



**Questions/Concerns**

- For inquiries about these changes or the respiratory virus testing program, contact:
  - Dr. Byron Berenger, Medical Microbiologist, APL [Byron.Berenger@aplabs.ca](mailto:Byron.Berenger@aplabs.ca)
  - Dr. Nathan Zelyas, Medical Microbiologist, APL [Nathan.Zelyas@aplabs.ca](mailto:Nathan.Zelyas@aplabs.ca)

**Approved by**

- Dr. Carolyn O'Hara, Interim Chief Medical Laboratory Officer, APL

*Effective September 1, 2023, APL has become the sole provider of all public lab services in Alberta. As a result, community lab services formally provided by DynaLIFE Medical Labs will become the responsibility of Alberta Precision Labs (APL). This change impacts all zones.*