

**Date:** September 13, 2016  
**To:** All South Zone West Physicians  
**From:** AHS Laboratory Services  
**Re:** Changes to Microbiological Testing of Vaginal Specimens

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**TOPIC: Changes to Microbiological Testing of Vaginal Specimens**

**Effective Date: October 17, 2016**

**Key Messages:**

1. Tests that were previously bundled as part of the “genital culture” request must now be explicitly ordered on a requisition or in Meditech OE.
  - These include testing for *Trichomonas*, bacterial vaginosis/yeast, and bacterial culture.
2. As before, bacterial culture on vaginal specimens will only be performed when a significant history is indicated. The approved indications for this test have not been changed at this time.
3. A new South Zone requisition that reflects these changes has been distributed to assist with these changes.
4. Note that collection requirements for the specimens themselves have not changed.

**Background:**

Previously, microbiology testing of vaginal specimens was ordered as “genital culture” on the requisition. This would prompt routine testing for *Trichomonas* and bacterial vaginosis/yeast on all such specimens, regardless of indication, and bacterial culture was performed only if certain histories were indicated on the requisition for the laboratory.

To support clarity, physician autonomy, and appropriateness of laboratory test ordering, these tests have been unbundled from the previous “genital culture” order, and now can be ordered separately on the South Zone requisition and in Meditech. Testing for *Trichomonas*, bacterial vaginosis/yeast, and bacterial culture must now be explicitly and separately ordered.

Note that bacterial culture still requires the appropriate history to be indicated on the requisition in order to be performed. The criteria for vaginal culture has not changed, and currently includes toxic shock syndrome, endometritis, genitourinary surgery, among others.

**Action Required:**

1. If testing for *Trichomonas* is indicated, order on requisition or in Meditech OE.
  - Submit vaginal specimen on Amies swab (pink-top).
2. If testing for bacterial vaginosis/yeast is indicated, order on requisition or in Meditech OE.
  - Submit vaginal smear on glass slide.
3. If vaginal culture is indicated, order on requisition or in Meditech OE, and include appropriate history.
  - Submit vaginal specimen on Amies swab (pink-top).
  - Only one swab is required if both *Trichomonas* testing and culture are ordered.

**Inquiries and feedback may be directed to:**

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