

Date: July 2, 2019
To: Transplant services, Comprehensive Tissue Centre, Lion's Eye Bank, Adult BMT and Pediatric BMT
From: Alberta Public Laboratories (APL) – ProvLab and Alberta Public Laboratories (APL)
Re: Implementation of Nucleic Acid Testing for the Screening of Transplant Donors

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Key Message:

- Effective July 2, 2019, all nucleic acid-based screening of transplant donor patients for HIV, HCV, HBV, and West Nile Virus (WNV) will be carried out at ProvLab. Nucleic acid tests (NAT) will no longer be sent to the Mt Sinai Hospital Laboratory (Toronto).
- This change only affects tissue, eye, and bone marrow transplant programs (NAT assays for HOPE and Living Organ Donor programs will continue unchanged).
- Results will be reported as “detected” or “not detected.” These are equivalent to the current reporting terms used by Mt Sinai Hospital Laboratory as “positive” or “negative,” respectively.
- Requisitions have been updated and consolidated to reflect the change in testing (see below for the link to the new requisition).
- Specimen requirements for donor screening NAT are unchanged:
 - > 5.0 mL blood in EDTA (lavender top tube, 2 x 4.0 mL or 1 x 6.0 mL)
- STAT NAT testing will continue for certain types of tissue donors (e.g., ocular donors) and will be carried out if STAT is marked on the requisition.
- Serology-based screening for infectious disease markers in donor populations will continue unchanged.

Why this is important:

- Previously, the NAT for HIV, HCV, HBV and WNV were performed either at the ProvLab or Mt. Sinai Hospital Laboratory, depending on the type of donor. With the implementation of Health Canada-licensed instrument and reagents for HIV, HCV, HBV and WNV on the Cobas 6800 platform, all of the testing in donors for these pathogens will now be performed at ProvLab. However, HOPE and Living Organ Donor programs will continue to use the current diagnostic NAT assays performed at ProvLab for these infectious disease markers for the time being. This change is anticipated to improve turnaround time, testing efficiency, costs, and overall patient care by providing local testing for the transplant population.

Action Required:

- Effective July 2, 2019, use the updated Tissue and Bone Marrow Transplant Donor Testing Requisition to order laboratory screening for infectious disease markers for transplant donors found at <https://www.albertahealthservices.ca/lab/Page3320.aspx> under the ProvLab tab

Inquiries and feedback may be directed to:

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This bulletin has been reviewed and approved by:

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