

Date: November 20, 2013

To: Calgary Zone
Physicians, Medical Officers of Health, Nurse Managers, Educators and Practitioners, STI Clinics, Laboratory Directors and Managers

From: Provincial Laboratory for Public Health (ProvLab) and Calgary Laboratory Services (CLS)

Re: Transition of Testing for Herpes simplex Virus and Varicella zoster Virus from CLS to ProvLab

PLEASE POST OR DISTRIBUTE AS WIDELY AS APPROPRIATE

Key Messages:

- **Effective December 01, 2013**, testing for Herpes simplex virus (HSV) and Varicella zoster virus (VZV) currently performed at Calgary Laboratory Services (CLS) will be transferred to ProvLab.
- The methodology will change from the CLS Direct Fluorescent Antibody (DFA) methodology to the Polymerase Chain Reaction (PCR) methodology used at ProvLab.
- PCR testing is more sensitive than DFA testing. Samples that test positive for Herpes simplex will be sub-typed to determine if they are type 1 or type 2.

Action Required:**Prior to December 01, 2013**

- Order an appropriate supply of **Universal Transport Medium (UTM), swabs and ProvLab Virology requisitions** from ProvLab using the [Specimen Collection Kits/Requisition Order Form](#). The order form is found on page 12 of the ProvLab Guide to Services at: www.provlab.ab.ca/guide-to-services.pdf or by calling ProvLab Stores at: 403-944-1240.
- Return all unused Herpes slide collection kits to CLS.

After December 01, 2013

- Refer to the "[Sample Type and Collection Guidelines for Herpes simplex Virus \(HSV\) and Varicella zoster Virus \(VZV\) Testing](#)" posted on the ProvLab website at: www.provlab.ab.ca/education.htm.
- Complete one ProvLab Virology requisition for each patient requiring testing.
 - Check off Varicella zoster or Herpes simplex for detection of virus.
 - Clearly indicate the specimen sites on BOTH the requisition and sample containers, if multiple sites are being tested.
- Swab the lesion(s) and place swab in Universal Transport Medium container.

There will be a two month transition period ending **January 31, 2014**. **Samples received after this date in kits other than in UTM will NOT be tested.** Scrapings of the lesions sent on the dual well herpes slide provided in the Herpes collection kit will no longer be acceptable.

Testing and Reporting:

- Testing will be performed at ProvLab three times a week.
- Results will be available in Alberta Netcare and delivered through ProvLab's Cerner Millennium® LIS method.
- For clinically indicated STAT requests, contact the ProvLab Virologist-on-Call at 403-944-1200.

Inquiries and feedback may be directed to:

- Dr. Kevin Fonseca, Program Lead at: 403-944-1263 or email: Kevin.Fonseca@albertahealthservices.ca
- Dr. Dan Gregson, Medical Microbiologist at: 403-770-3338 or email: Dan.Gregson@CLS.ab.ca

This bulletin has been reviewed and approved by:

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