
Date: September 23, 2019
To: All Providers, Edmonton Zone and North Sector
From: Alberta Public Laboratories (APL) - ProvLab
Re: Method Change for Cryptococcal Antigen Testing (ProvLab)

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Key Message:

- *Cryptococcus* spp are potentially fatal causes of fungal pneumonia and meningitis, and require urgent diagnostic detection for appropriate management. While *Cryptococcus gattii* is an endemic fungus in British Columbia, *Cryptococcus neoformans* is ubiquitous and is an opportunistic pathogen that is found worldwide.
- Cryptococcal antigen (CrAg) testing on serum and CSF is considered the gold standard diagnostic method for diagnosis of cryptococcosis.
- ProvLab will be switching CrAg methods from the CALAS latex agglutination assay to the IMMY lateral flow assay on September 3, 2019. This change standardizes the method for Cryptococcal antigen testing across the province.

Why this is important:

- CrAg titers in patients with cryptococcosis are used to monitor response to therapy and infection resolution.
- Due to differences in the CALAS and IMMY methods, the CrAg titers **should not** be compared between assays. If titers are being used to monitor a patient with diagnosed cryptococcosis, a new baseline titer should be obtained with the IMMY assay to continue monitoring response to therapy.
- Note that ProvLab performs all titers for the Edmonton Zone and North Sector.

Action Required:

- If currently monitoring a patient by performing routine CrAg titers, obtain a new baseline titer using the new IMMY method.
- Otherwise no action is required by ordering providers. Ordering, processing and reporting of CrAg results remains the same.

Inquiries and feedback may be directed to:

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