

Date: Sept 19, 2017
To: All UAH Providers
From: Provincial Laboratory for Public Health (ProvLab)
Re: Rapid Organism Identification from Blood Cultures
Using MALDI-TOF Mass Spectrometry

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Key Messages:

- Sepsis is a major cause of morbidity and mortality. Rapid identification of organisms in the blood of patients with sepsis has been shown to improve clinical outcomes.
- As of **Sept 18th, 2017**, ProvLab will be performing a rapid organism identification method directly from positive blood cultures.
- This new method will provide an organism identification within 3 to 12 hours of a positive blood culture.

New Test Method:

- The new rapid organism identification method, MALDI-TOF mass spectrometry, will be performed directly on all new, monomicrobial blood cultures performed at UAH.
- This method will identify 75% of blood culture pathogens within 3 to 12 hours of a positive blood culture, which is a significant improvement over traditional methods that can take 12 to 48 hours.
- Mixed blood cultures and organisms which are unidentifiable by this method will continue to be identified by traditional methods.

Why this is important:

- Sepsis is a major cause of morbidity and mortality, and it is widely accepted that the sooner appropriate antimicrobials are initiated, the better the patient outcomes.

Action Required:

- No action is required. This method will be performed automatically on all new positive blood cultures showing a single organism on Gram stain.
- ProvLab technologists will continue to call the unit with the positive blood culture Gram stain.
- The Microbiologist/Resident-On-Call will call the most responsible provider with the rapid MALDI-TOF preliminary organism identification.

Inquiries and feedback may be directed to:

Tanis Dingle, Ph.D., FCCM, D(ABMM), Clinical Microbiologist, ProvLab:
tanis.dingle@albertahealthservices.ca

Prenilla Naidu, MD, FRCPC, Medical Microbiologist, ProvLab:
Prenilla.Naidu2@albertahealthservices.ca

This bulletin has been reviewed and approved by:

Dr. Graham Tipples, Medical/Scientific Director, ProvLab