



Date: October 5, 2020
To: Northern Lights Health Centre, Physicians, Nurses, Unit Locations
From: Hospital Laboratory Operations, *DynaLIFE* Medical Labs
Re: Referral of Urine Toxicology Testing from Northern Lights Health Centre

PLEASE POST OR DISTRIBUTE AS WIDELY AS APPROPRIATE

Key Message:

- Effective **October 5, 2020**, Urine Drugs of Abuse Screening will no longer be performed at the Northern Lights Health Centre (NLHC) Laboratory and will be referred to the Toxicology Laboratory at the University of Alberta Hospital (UAH) in Edmonton.
- Anticipated turnaround time is less than 72 hours **from time of receipt** at the UAH.
- There is daily transportation from NLHC to UAH
- Results will be available in Netcare and Physician Office Systems (POS).

Why This Is Important:

- The current urine drug screen methodology used at NLHC is neither sensitive nor specific for drugs of abuse, and is prone to false positives and false negatives. Additionally, it does not detect clinically important drugs such as fentanyl.
- The UAH Toxicology Laboratory performs toxicology testing by mass spectrometry, the gold standard for urine drug testing. This methodology is highly sensitive and specific and can detect emerging drugs of abuse such as fentanyl and carfentanil. Performing this test at the UAH will enhance the results received by the physician and improve patient care.

Action Required:

- Order Urine 'General Toxicology Panel' by using Mediatech test code DSUR.
 - The Urine Opioid Dependency Panel is also available, but should only be requested if actively managing a patient on opioid agonist therapy (e.g. buprenorphine, methadone), previously known as Methadone Maintenance Treatment Program. This is not typically ordered on NLHC inpatients or ED patients.
 - For drugs included in the new panels, please refer to:
<http://www.ahsweb.ca/lab/ToxicologyDrugTestigPanel>
- For information regarding toxicology testing performed at UAH contact Penny Colbourne, PhD, F-ABFT, Clinical Toxicologist at 780-407-4729.
- Poison and Drug Information Service (PADIS) Medical Toxicologists are on-call 24/7/365 to consult on management of poisoned patients at 1-800-332-1414.

Inquiries and feedback may be directed to:

- Penny Colbourne, PhD, F-ABFT, Clinical Toxicologist, Toxicology Laboratory, UAH, 780-407-4729, Penny.Colbourne@albertaprecisionlabs.ca
- DynaLIFE Medical Labs, Clinical Chemists, 780 451-3702 x3572, Clinical.Chemists@dynalife.ca
- Dr. Osman Tutuncuoglu, NLHC General Pathologist, APL, 780 791-6161 x6151

This bulletin has been reviewed and approved by:

Dr. Raymond Lai, Medical Director, *DynaLIFE* Medical Labs

Dr. Carolyn O'Hara, Interim Chief Medical Officer, Alberta Precision Laboratories