

**Date:** June 17, 2019  
**To:** All Zones – Nursing, Physicians, Medical Officers of Health, and Laboratories  
**From:** Alberta Public Laboratories (APL) – ProvLab  
**Re:** Update on Ebola Virus Molecular Testing at ProvLab

---

PLEASE POST OR DISTRIBUTE AS WIDELY AS APPROPRIATE

---

### Key Message:

- Ebola virus (Zaire strain) PCR is being decentralized from the National Microbiology Laboratory (NML), Winnipeg, and has been re-implemented at ProvLab South and ProvLab North effective immediately as a response to an on-going outbreak in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC).
- NML will continue to offer Ebola virus molecular testing and serology along with testing for other Risk Group 4 pathogens as appropriate based on epidemiology and clinical history.
- Special protocols and test menus for other testing (i.e. chemistry, hematology, blood cultures and malaria detection) on patients suspected of Ebola virus diseases (EVD) must follow already established EVD protocols.
- Laboratory testing for suspected Ebola patients will only be collected and processed after appropriate consultation with the Zone Medical Officer of Health (MOH) and laboratory stakeholders.

### Background and Importance:

- On the 1<sup>st</sup> of August 2018, the Ministry of Health of the DRC declared an outbreak of EVD due to the Ebola virus Zaire strain in North Kivu Province. As of the 4<sup>th</sup> of June 2019, this ongoing outbreak has resulted in more than 2000 cases and over 1200 deaths.
- Laboratory diagnosis is performed primarily by the detection of viral RNA using RT-PCR, or the detection of IgM/IgG antibodies directed against Ebola. The PCR method at ProvLab (both at the ProvLab Calgary and Edmonton sites) is the same as that used by the NML and is specific for the Ebola Zaire strain. NML performs both molecular and serological EVD testing. NML also offers testing for other Risk Group 4 agents including Ebola virus (multiple strains), Lassa fever virus, Nipah virus, Crimean-Congo hemorrhagic fever virus and Kyasanur Forest virus. Turn-around time for Ebola testing at ProvLab is approximately 6-8 hours from sample collection. Turn-around time for NML testing is approximately 24 hours from sample collection.
- All information related to laboratory testing of persons under investigation for Ebola can be found at <http://www.albertahealthservices.ca/topics/Page10597.aspx>

### Action required:

- Suspected cases of EVD require **immediate** consultation with the Zone Medical Officer of Health on call before any testing is ordered or samples collected.
- Following a risk assessment, further instructions will be provided for patient management and specimen collection. No testing will be performed until this risk assessment is complete.

### Inquiries and feedback may be directed to:

Dr. Saugata Choudhury, Clinical Microbiologist (403) 944-4924; [Saugata.Choudhury@albertahealthservices.ca](mailto:Saugata.Choudhury@albertahealthservices.ca)  
Dr. Mathew Diggle, Clinical Microbiologist, (780) 407-3068; [Mathew.Diggle@albertapubliclabs.ca](mailto:Mathew.Diggle@albertapubliclabs.ca)

### This bulletin has been reviewed and approved by:

Dr. Graham Tipples, Medical/Scientific Director, ProvLab