Date: September 30, 2020
To: All AHS Zone Emergency Operations Centers (ZEOC) – for distribution to all teams responsible for collection of COVID-19 swabs including community and assessment center collections
From: Alberta Precision Laboratories (APL)
Re: Visualization Process for Priority Specimen Identification of COVID-19 Swabs

PLEASE POST OR DISTRIBUTE AS WIDELY AS APPROPRIATE

Key Message:
Effective immediately, COVID-19 swabs and requisitions on patients meeting priority criteria (i.e. including those collected in the community collections and at assessment centers) must be marked using the process outlined below, prior to transportation to the lab. The following Alberta Health priorities that are to be visually marked are:

- Symptomatic individuals (i.e. cough, fever, shortness of breath, runny nose, or sore throat)
- Outbreak Investigations by Public Health
- Close Contacts identified through Public Health Contact Tracing

NOTE: Healthcare workers, educators and other essential workers are included in the prioritization only if they fall within one of the above listed criteria.

Why this is Important:
This process will ensure that the lab can quickly and efficiently identify specimens that are to be processed first. This will improve the lab’s ability to meet the required 24-hour turnaround time for high priority COVID-19 test results.

Background
- APL continues to experience an increasing demand for prioritization of COVID-19 testing and therefore a process to prioritize testing within the province must be followed. Due to the massive volumes, swabs/requisitions not appropriately marked cannot be prioritized retroactively if they were not identified using this process.
- Please refer to the Alberta Health website for details: https://www.alberta.ca/covid-19-testing-in-alberta.aspx

Action Required:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Step</th>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Perform COVID-19 swab collection</td>
<td>Perform swab and secondary patient identification as per existing process.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Apply a black Sharpie “X” on both specimen and requisition for priority swabs</td>
<td>For specimens meeting the above criteria, apply a black Sharpie “X” on both the top of the cap of the specimen and the top right hand corner of the Requisition.</td>
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| 3    | Package and transport swabs and requisitions | Assessment Centers: Package and transport tubes as per the Racking Process for COVID-19 Samples at Assessment Centers Lab Bulletin  
All Other Sites: Place specimen vial in the specimen bag  
Place folded requisition in the sleeve of the bag, ensuring the black Sharpie “X” is visible  
Transport swabs to designated lab as per established process |

www.albertaprecisionlabs.ca
Inquiries and feedback may be directed to:

- Christine Yamniuk, APL Director, Co-Chair APL COVID-19 Incident Command Center 780-952-2066, christine.yamniuk@aplabs.ca

This bulletin has been reviewed and approved by:

- Tammy Hofer, Chief Operating Officer, APL
- Carolyn O’Hara, Interim Chief Medical Laboratory Officer, APL