



Memorandum

Date: January 20, 2016

To: Calgary Rural Physicians

From: Dr. Amid Abdullah, Consult Pathologist, Calgary Rural Laboratories
Dr. Hossein Sadrzadeh, Clinical Section Chief, Clinical Biochemistry

Re: **Discontinuation of STAT Urine Drug Screen (UDS) Testing in Rural Laboratories**

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Key Messages:

In order to standardize best practice in the province Calgary rural laboratories will no longer provide STAT UDS, a decision supported by the AHS Laboratory Toxicology Network.

Impact:

All UDS specimens will be transported to the CLS Diagnostic and Scientific Centre (DSC) for quantitative testing with a turnaround time of 24 hours after receipt of the specimen at the DSC.

Background:

Qualitative toxicology testing appears to be of limited value in emergency situations for the following reasons:

- It does not confirm or rule out significant poisoning
- It almost never provides information that leads to a meaningful change in acute medical management
- Countless drugs contribute to common clinical symptoms seen in an emergency department that are not tested for by immunoassay screening tests
- The testing is not specific (i.e. there are multiple false positives, which require explanation and perhaps needless investigations)
- A positive test does not mean that this is what is contributing to the patient's symptoms
- It does not detect synthetic cannabinoids
- The Poison and Drug Information Service (PADIS) is available for drug consultations with health care professionals 24 hours a day, seven days a week at 1-800-332-1414
- For information on STAT UDS limitations contact the hospital laboratory

Inquiries and feedback may be directed to:

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This memorandum has been reviewed and approved by:

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