

Date: December 1, 2011
To: All zones - Physicians and Laboratory Directors and Managers
From: Laboratory Operations Steering Committee
Re: Introduction of Province-Wide Reflex Testing for High-Risk HPV Types

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Key Messages:

Alberta Health Services, in collaboration with its laboratory partners Calgary Laboratory Services (CLS) and DynaLifeDx, will introduce province-wide reflex testing for human papillomavirus (HPV) commencing December 5, 2011.

Why this is important:

As a reflex test, HPV testing will be performed on the Liquid Based Cytology Pap samples based on the Pap test result. The targeted age group includes women 30 years and older with an initial Pap cytology result of Atypical Squamous Cells of Undetermined Significance (ASC-US) and women 50 and older with a Pap result of Low-grade squamous intraepithelial lesion (LSIL). The test looks for 13 or 14 high-risk HPV types and is reported as positive or negative. If the test is positive the patient will be referred for colposcopy and if negative the woman will return to routine Pap screening.

These changes are based on Toward Optimized Practice's updated 2011 Guideline for Screening for Cervical Cancer (http://topalbertadoctors.org/cpgs.php?sid=2&cpg_cats=15.) There will be no need for health care providers to order the test as it will be performed on the residual sample in the liquid-based Pap specimen when reflex testing is indicated.

Triaging selected patients with abnormal Pap test results using the high-risk HPV test will allow those at higher risk to be sent for follow-up immediately, while women who are not at high risk will return to Pap screening at the routine interval.

Action Required:

Reflex testing of HPV will be the responsibility of the laboratory performing the Liquid Based Cytology Pap test.

To facilitate discussions between primary healthcare providers and their patients regarding HPV reflex tests, the Alberta Cervical Cancer Screening Program (ACCSP) has developed an information sheet for women. Copies of the information sheet will be included when you order Pap test supplies from the lab. For more information about HPV, or to order brochures or other resources from the ACCSP, please visit www.screeningforlife.ca or call toll-free 1-866-727-3926.

For inquiries and feedback:

If you have any questions specific to the test, please contact the Directors of Cytopathology:

- At DynaLifeDx, Dr. Gordon Johnson: 780-451-3702 or Gordon.Johnson2@albertahealthservices.ca
- At CLS, Dr. Ranjit Waghray, 403-770-3204 or Ranjit.Waghray@cls.ab.ca

This bulletin has been reviewed and approved by
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