

Date: November 14, 2011

To: Transplant Programs, Infectious Diseases Divisions, Neurology Divisions, Hematology Divisions, Fertility Clinics, Dr André Corriveau, Dr Gerry Predy, Laboratories

From: Provincial Laboratory for Public Health (ProvLab)

Re: National Shortage of HTLV I/II Serology Kits

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Key Message:

Due to a national shortage of serology kits for the detection of antibodies against HTLV I/II, requests to ProvLab for this assay will have to be prioritized. This may result in an increase in the turnaround time for most requests until an alternate assay is implemented.

STAT requests for solid organ transplantation will be given priority.

Background:

ProvLab and many other Canadian Laboratories use the Ortho HTLV-I/HTLV-II Ab Capture assay. Currently the manufacturer is experiencing production problems and cannot supply new kits. At this time it is unclear when production will resume.

Currently ProvLab has a supply of kits that should last several weeks provided that prioritization of requests is done, as outlined below. We are also initiating a validation of another assay; we expect to be able to implement the new assay within the next few weeks.

In order to maintain our testing capacity during this shortage, the following measures will be implemented immediately:

- 1) Priority is given to STAT requests for solid organ transplantation
- 2) For patients with hematological or neurological diseases compatible with HTLV-induced disease, clinicians should consider testing by proviral PCR instead. This must be arranged by discussion with the Virologist-on-Call (VOC). The assay requires a blood in EDTA sample, to be submitted early in the week for shipment to the National Microbiology Laboratory.
- 3) Routine screening requests from fertility clinics, tissue donors etc will be tested at a reduced frequency and consequently the turnaround time will increase. Situations demanding a more rapid testing should be discussed with the VOC.

Inquiries and feedback may be directed to:

Dr Raymond Tellier, Program Leader, Transplant Program, ProvLab at Raymond.Tellier@albertahealthservices.ca or by phone at 403-944-2724

For questions about specific patients, please contact the Virologist-on-Call:

Edmonton Site - Phone: 780-407-7121 (ask for Virologist-on-Call)
Calgary Site – Phone: 403-944-1200 (ask for Virologist-on-Call)

This bulletin has been reviewed and approved by Dr. Greg Tyrrell, Acting Associate Medical Director