



## LABORATORY BULLETIN

2009 - January - 8

Bulletin # 2009 - 1

**To: Pediatric and Adult ID Physicians  
Laboratory Directors and Managers  
Medical Officers of Health  
Alberta Health and Wellness  
Intensive Care Specialists (Adult, PICU and NICU)  
Transplant Program Directors and Coordinators  
Neurologists  
Emergency Room Physicians**

**Re: Clarification of local viral molecular testing available on CSF and special send-out and reference approvals for non-routine CSF requests**

**PLEASE POST OR DISTRIBUTE WIDELY AS APPROPRIATE**

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### **Clarification of local testing and changes to procedure for approval of viral CSF and send-out reference testing effective 12<sup>th</sup> January 2009**

Since implementation of nucleic acid tests (NATs), ProvLab is able to provide sensitive and specific testing for the main viral causes of central nervous system infections. On receipt of a requisition with specific testing requested for herpes simplex virus (HSV) 1 or 2, varicella-zoster virus (VZV), enteroviruses or West Nile virus (WNV) on CSF we undertake such testing routinely without the need for prior consultation with the Virologist on Call (VOC). Other requests for viral investigation require prior consultation with the VOC/MOC in Edmonton or Calgary before they can be processed. Noteworthy as well, if a requisition is received requesting 'viral studies' (i.e. no specific virus indicated) on a CSF, only enterovirus PCR will be performed, unless the patient is less than 6 months of age in which case enterovirus and HSV PCR will be performed. Clinicians are encouraged to specify on the requisition which virus(es) should be tested for in order to provide optimal patient care.

We frequently have requests for viral or other pathogen investigations on CSF that are not available routinely (especially CMV, EBV, HHV6, arboviruses, JC virus, Lyme disease). Such testing is either limited in its clinical application and requires special interpretation alongside blood to ensure clinical specificity (e.g. CMV and EBV) and/or requires detailed history and rule out of other possible causes before send out to a reference laboratory (e.g. HHV6, JC virus, Lyme disease). Follow up of these requests to try and clarify the clinical history takes a lot of time and often the request is cancelled after this discussion.

In order to improve efficiency and to avoid delays in critical CSF testing that will be undertaken (for HSV1, HSV2, VZV, WNV, enteroviruses), **from January 12<sup>th</sup> 2009 we will not be calling submitters to clarify special requests for non-routine CSF testing.** We will close down the test referring the submitter to the VOC if there is a need for follow up (via 403 944 1200 in Calgary or 780 407 7121 in Edmonton).

If you have a specific need for non-routine CSF testing please call the VOC before submitting the sample and requisition to ensure we have all the information we need to manage your test requests appropriately and to avoid possible delays.

If you have any queries or comments regarding this bulletin or other aspects of viral/special pathogen CSF testing please contact one of us:



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This bulletin was distributed to:

- ◆ Infectious Disease Physicians- Edmonton, Calgary
- ◆ Medical Officers of Health- Alberta, First Nations, Northwest Territories, Nunavut
- ◆ Transplant Program Coordinators and Directors
- ◆ Alberta Health & Wellness
- ◆ Critical Care Physicians- Edmonton, Calgary
- ◆ Laboratory Directors/Consultants of Alberta
- ◆ Laboratory Managers- Alberta, Northwest Territories, Nunavut
- ◆ Emergency Physicians- Edmonton