



LABORATORY BULLETIN

2006 - March - 9

Bulletin # 2006 - 1

To:

Alberta Health and Wellness	Chair, Animal Care Committee
Dr. Greg Tyrrell	Dr. Jeff Fuller
Dr. Jim Kellner	Dr. Kevin Fonseca
Dr. Kinga Kowalewska	Dr. Lil Miedzinski
Dr. Robert Rennie	Dr. Peter Tilley
Dr. Steve Shafran	Dr. Ron Read
Dr. Wendy Vaudry	Dr. Wadieh Yacoub
Mauro Chies	Terry Chelich
Environmental Health Officer(s) of Northwest Territories	
Laboratory Directors and Managers of Alberta	
Laboratory Manager of Northwest Territories	
Medical Officers of Health of Alberta	
Senior Environmental Health Officers of Alberta	

Re: Testing for Botulinum toxin and Culture for *Clostridium botulinum*

PLEASE POST OR DISTRIBUTE WIDELY AS APPROPRIATE

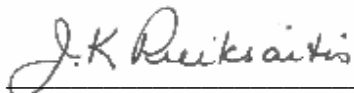
Effective March 20, 2006, testing for the detection of Botulinum toxin or culture for *Clostridium botulinum* will be discontinued at the Provincial Laboratory for Public Health (Microbiology)[ProvLab] and referred to the Botulism Reference Service (BRS) in Ottawa.

Over the last several years, there has been a steady decline in the number of specimens submitted for testing. To perform the mouse neutralization assay for botulinum toxin, a colony of animals must be maintained to have ready at hand if the need for testing arises. Given that we perform so few tests, many of the animals must be discarded because as they age or change in size, they no longer can be used for the test. As well, maintaining ongoing expertise with such limited testing is very difficult. We feel it is not appropriate to continue maintaining supplies and animals on the rare chance that they will be needed for testing.

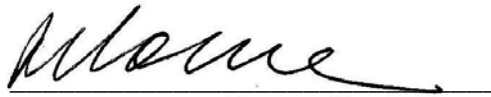
Clinical specimens and/or food samples for testing will be transferred through either the Calgary site or Edmonton site to the BRS in Ottawa. Laboratory results will be reported to the submitter by ProvLab.

Arrangements have been coordinated with Dr. John Austin, Head of the BRS regarding transfer of specimens to their facility for testing. The BRS currently provides Botulism testing services to all of the provinces in Canada except for Alberta and B.C. There is no charge for the testing performed at the BRS.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this change, please feel free to contact us.



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