

PANDEMIC LABORATORY ALERT

To: All Physicians and Physician Clinics, Nursing Units/Managers, Long Term Care Facilities, Nursing Homes, CD Nurses, MOHs, Laboratory Directors and Managers, ID Physicians, Brenda Hannah and IP&C, Emergency Room Physicians, ICU Physicians

From: AHS Laboratory Services Pandemic Communications Centre
AHS Emergency Coordination Centre

Re: LABORATORY FUNCTIONAL CAPACITY REDUCED

PLEASE POST OR DISTRIBUTE WIDELY AS APPROPRIATE

The Provincial Laboratory is experiencing:

- LOW (Initiation/Surge) pandemic impact levels (at maximal level of capacity)**
- MODERATE (Selective Prioritization) pandemic impact levels
- HIGH pandemic (System Wide Prioritization) impact levels

Because of the increased testing volumes, the following function(s) is/are affected:

- Ability to provide full test menu for respiratory virus testing at ProvLab
- Ability to maintain normal courier service
- Ability to maintain normal hours of operation
- Ability to keep all sites functional
- Ability to provide mobile lab collections
- Ability to deliver paper lab reports

What this means to you:

- Not all tests will be available: Due to high volume of respiratory samples, ProvLab will initiate respiratory virus testing prioritization as per the Alberta Health Services Pandemic Response Plan.
- Samples may degrade before they can be tested due to transport delays
- There will be delays in getting results to you
- Other:
 1. DFA will be performed only for nasopharyngeal samples from hospitalized patients and long-term care outbreaks.
 2. Respiratory virus panel (RVP) testing will be performed only for Tarrant viral watch program, hospitalized patients, outbreak samples and random 5% of community samples.

Generally pandemic influenza has been a mild self-limiting illness, and testing is not required in mild cases. Indications for testing may include severe disease, risk factors for severe respiratory illness or outbreaks of respiratory illness in facilities as directed by the Medical Officer of Health.

What you need to do:

Please use the **NEW Influenza and Respiratory Virus Testing During Pandemic Requisition** that is posted on the Alberta Health Services and ProvLab websites. For ProvLab website access, click on Partners, then Partner Updates.