

PROVINCIAL LABORATORY SERVICES
COMMUNIQUÉ

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TO: Island Physicians, Nurse Practitioners, Joint Response Team Leaders

FROM: Dr. Greg German Division Head of Microbiology Services
Brian Timmons, Director Provincial Laboratory Services

DATE: April 9, 2020

RE: **On-Island Testing for COVID-19, request form, Order entry required fields**

COVID-19 Virus testing on PEI is rapidly changing. For the next week routine testing is provided by Halifax (QEII) on a daily basis (including weekend / holiday) with 24- 48 hour turnaround time (TAT). At the same time, we will begin bringing our local high output machine online (BD MAX) to provide even quicker TAT (4-6 hours upon receipt at the QEH).

We now have rapid testing available on a limited base about 150 tests per week divided at two sites PCH (now started April 8), and QEH (April 1st). We need to conserve these tests both within hospital and in the community for high-risk situations. This does require extensive chart review and triage and depends in part with our previous approvals throughout the day and supply status. Therefore, you will notice the outpatient request form (attached) which has started today and is used for outpatient sites and downtime.

For patients in ER (admitted and non-admitted) and other admitted inpatients the COVID-19 Virus orderable now has two mandatory fields. One is Coronavirus Testing priority, which has 10 different categories (see below). The other is a mandatory freetext field to include: symptoms travel, and if CPHO has been directly involved. Please assess your patient before ordering and continue to use our most recent guidelines on when to test. There is a reference page popup to assist.

Testing Priority Categories (Computer entry):

AGMP (Pending/Current) || ER (Admitting) || ER (not admitting) || HCW 1 (Critical Role) || HCW 2 (Supportive Role) || ICU || Interfacility transfer || Long Term Care || Other ("See Freetext") || Ward

Rapid test will most likely be approved for AGMP and ICU is selected (while we have sufficient stock). ER-inpatient and Ward rapid approval will depend on the PPE needs and if the rapid test will change a patient's PPE status. At PCH this test will be run 24/7. At QEH this test will run weekdays from 8 am to 10 pm; weekends from 8 to 6 pm. For outpatient clinics these will be reviewed as they come in and no extra action is necessary. For patient in ER and admitted patients: please have RT or the physician page medical microbiologist on call for all rapid tests that must be performed within the next 6 hours. Afterhours or for any other testing please page the medical microbiologist on call or if can wait until the next morning call 902-894-2515 and leave a message. Please have the physician or RT page the medical microbiologist. Paging or calling the microbiology technologist for rapid approval is not appropriate.

Rapid tests will also be available on a more select basis for long-term care patients and health care workers and will be reviewed individually.

With this COVID-19 pandemic there is unfortunately a decreased allotment of influenza testing which may affect our ability to provide rapid testing service in the near future, please keep this in mind if your patient only has minor symptoms.

Minor notes:

Presumptive results both positive and negative should be actioned on as confirmed results; this is a standard protocol across the country.

Sensitivity: The more significant the symptomatology, the greater the sensitivity, minor symptoms ~65%, increasing to 85% for a fever or cough, better than 90% for fever and cough, and estimates of 95% for ARDS for NP swabs.

A test is just a test: Your clinical judgement and epidemiological factors play an equally important role in removing precautions or considering retesting. Medical Microbiology, Infectious diseases, Infection control, and CPHO are available to assist.

Long Weekend Coverage: Dr. Pouya Sadeghi-Aval will be on call over the Easter weekend for medical microbiology. He is a General Pathologist and not an infectious diseases physician / consultant. It may be helpful to page infectious diseases on call in Halifax to review a complicated inpatient if necessary, likewise Dr. Morrison / CPHO may be able to assist with clinical triage.

Appendix 1:

Details for **Novel Coronavirus PCR (COVID-19 Virus PCR)**

Details | Order Comments

+ [Icons]

*Specimen type: [Dropdown]	*Coronavirus Testing Category: [Dropdown]
*Freetext/History: [Text Area]	*Collection priority: AGMP (Pending / Current)
*Collected: <input type="radio"/> Yes <input checked="" type="radio"/> No	ER (admitting)
*Requested Start Date/Time: 2020-Apr-09 09:18	ER (not admitting)
Copies to: [Text]	HWCW 1 (Critical Role)
	HWCW 2 (Supportive Role)
	ICU
	Interfacility transfer
	Long Term Care
	Other (see Freetext)
	Ward