

PHSA Laboratories

BCCDC Public Health Laboratory

April 9, 2020

Dear Colleagues,

Respiratory Pathogen Testing –Algorithm Changes in Response to COVID-2019 Pandemic

Typically, the BCCDC Public Health Laboratory (BCCDC PHL) screens clinical samples submitted for respiratory virus detection for Influenza A/B/RSV by an in-house developed RT-PCR assay. Samples are tested for a broader array of viruses using the Luminex NxTAG Respiratory Pathogen Panel (RPP) if the Influenza A/B/RSV PCR is negative and the patient meets one or more of the following criteria: (i) <5 years old, (ii) part of an outbreak, or (iii) hospitalized (by request). Samples with requests for atypical bacterial agents are automatically tested by the NxTAG RPP.

In January 2020, BCCDC PHL initiated testing for the novel coronavirus that was identified as the cause of COVID-19. Since that time, respiratory specimens have been tested for influenza A/B/RSV and 2019-nCoV using in-house developed RT-PCR assays. As the COVID-19 pandemic has spread, the volume of testing for all laboratories has increased significantly. The following changes to the testing algorithm reflect low influenza and RSV infection rates in recent weeks.

- **From March 30th 2020, all respiratory virus requests will be tested by 2019-nCoV assay.**
- **Influenza A/B/RSV testing will be performed in addition to 2019-nCoV testing on samples from patients in long-term care centres, from outbreaks, from sentinel physicians, from pregnant women with respiratory symptoms and from hospitalized patients.**
- **If other patients require Influenza A/B/RSV testing, please consult the BCCDC medical microbiologist.**
- **Luminex NxTAG Respiratory Pathogen Panel will continue to be offered if samples are negative for influenza A/B/RSV and 2019nCoV, and the patient meets one or more of the following criteria: (i) <5 years old, (ii) part of an outbreak, or (iii) hospitalized (by request).**

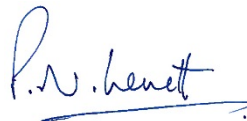
For other testing details please refer to the BCCDC Public Health Lab test menu:

<http://www.elabhandbook.info/phsa/>

Sincerely,



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