

Date:	March 10, 2021
To:	All Physicians and Nursing Supervisors - NH
From:	Dr. Sharla Olsen, Medical Lead for Pulmonary Function Testing (PFT)
Re:	Update on Pulmonary Function and Spirometry Testing in the North

Dear NH physicians,

The current wait list for PFT/spirometry testing at UHNBC is at least **6 months**. Please assist us in providing timely testing for your patients in the following ways:

1. Provide history/indication for test on the requisition form so we can appropriately triage your request for service.
2. Call the booking clerk if you have an urgent test. Indications for urgent testing are as follows:
 - lung cancer workup pre-op or for radiation
 - transplant patients
 - pre-op other thoracic surgery
 - neuromuscular disease with progression
 - other reasons may be reviewed with the medical lead or leave a message with the booking clerk and we will review the urgency
3. Please order spirometry whenever possible. Detailed PFT takes one hour. Spirometry takes 30 minutes. Spirometry is the most appropriate test for diagnosing COPD or asthma.
 - If the provided history says COPD or asthma and no reason for needing a detailed test is provided, **we will automatically substitute a spirometry instead** in order to facilitate booking for more patients.
4. Please direct your test to the appropriate site.
 - Spirometry testing is available in Terrace, Kitimat, Prince Rupert, Vanderhoof, Ft St John, Chetwynd, Tumbler Ridge, Dawson Creek and Quesnel. If your patient lives closer to one of these sites, the wait list will be shorter.
5. Only order PFT or spirometry testing that will change patient management. Remember that PFT and spirometry testing involves coughing and generates aerosols, and therefore poses an infection control risk. If testing is routine or will not change management please consider postponing the test.
6. Methacholine challenge testing continues to be unavailable in NH due to the lack of a negative pressure environment to perform this test.
7. The backlog of PFTs is primarily due to enhanced cleaning protocols required because of Covid-19. It is unknown when or if these protocols will change.

Sincerely,
Sharla-Rae Olsen (she/her), MD, FRCPC
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