

Date:	May 27, 2020
To:	All Northern Health Staff and Physicians
From:	Dr. Ronald Chapman, VP Medicine, Northern Lead Dr. Randy Dumont, NI Pathologist Dr. Kamran Azar, NH Lab Medical Lead
Cc	The COO's The Medical Directors
Re:	Novel coronavirus (COVID-19) – COVID-19 In-House Testing Update

Northern Health Lab services has validated a COVID-19 assay for testing in-house. On April 21st, UHNBC began testing for COVID-19 on eligible patients within Northern Health.

As of May 25th, MMH and FSJH have validated the GeneXpert platform on site and are now performing COVID-19 testing for eligible patients in each HSDA.

A provincial validation plan was followed and each site is fully validated to report negative results. The provincial standard is to confirm positive results with a reference lab, the next 5 positive results will be reported as presumptive positive and sent to Life Labs for confirmation.

Results will be available through regular reporting channels, including PowerChart or eHealth viewer.

Patient groups eligible to be tested in house remain the same, HOSP, LTC, OBK and FN-COMM. All other patient groups will continue to be tested at Life Labs.

Due to the ongoing limited supply of test kits, in-house testing is limited to:

- **HOSP**
 - Symptomatic Hospital (Inpatient)
 - Symptomatic patients admitted to hospital for surgery
 - Symptomatic Emergency Department (with intent to admit)
 - Symptomatic pregnant woman in their 3rd trimester
 - Symptomatic Renal patients
 - Symptomatic Cancer patients receiving treatment
 - Symptomatic Other immunocompromised patients
- **LTC** – Symptomatic Long term care facility resident
- **OBK** – Symptomatic residents or staff of long term care (LTC) facilities under outbreak investigations
- **Request by MHO/Public Health**
- **FN-COMM** – **Remote First Nations Communities Symptomatic:**
 - Fort St James area communities: Takla Lake, Yekooche, Tl'azt'en, Nak'azd'li
 - Finlay Hub area communities: Kwadacha, and Tsay Keh Dene
 - Fort Nelson
 - Coastal Tsimshian: Gitgaat, Kitkatla, Lax Kwalaams, and Metlakatla
 - Tahltan (Telegraph Creek) and Iskut

Other urgent requests for testing can be discussed with a pathologist on a case-by-case basis. We hope to expand testing if the supply of test kits improves.

Please continue to mark all requisitions and samples with one of the following patient groups in **RED**

HOSP

- Hospital (Inpatient)
- Emergency Department (with intent to admit)
- Symptomatic pregnant woman in their 3rd trimester
- Symptomatic patients admitted to hospital for surgery
- Renal patients
- Cancer patients receiving treatment
- Other immunocompromised patients

LTC – Long term care facility resident

OBK – Outbreak

- includes individuals who are homeless or have unstable housing in this category even if no outbreak

HCW1 – Health care worker - direct patient care

- designated as essential service providers (incl. first responders)

HCW2 – Health care worker - indirect patient care

COMM – Community Outpatient (**FN COMM** for symptomatic FN patients)

- Primary Care Clinic or COVID-19 Collection Clinic
- Emergency Department (non-admitted)
- COVID-19 Surveillance
- Returning travelers identified at point of entry.
- Residents of remote, isolated or indigenous communities

CGT – People living in congregate settings such as

- work-camps
- correctional facilities
- shelters
- group homes
- assisted living
- seniors' residences

Our goal is to improve turnaround time for patients in our health authority and will continue to advocate for additional in-house testing capacity for Northern Health.

For further information or questions please contact the medical leads Dr. Randall Dumont and Dr. Kamran Azar through Lisette Vienneau, Regional Director of Diagnostic Services at Lisette.vienneau@northernhealth.ca