

Date:	June 24, 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	Chief Operating Officers 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. Due to limited supply of test kits, in-house testing has been limited to HOSP, LTC, OBK and FN-CMM patient groups. All other patient groups have been tested at Life Labs.

Test kits are still limited; however, the supply has increased. Northern Health lab services can now expand in-house testing to include samples from Health Care workers (HCW1 and 2). The updated patient's group list is as follows:

- **HOSP**
- **LTC**
- **OBK**
- **HCW1**
- **HCW2**
- **FN-CMM**
- **CGT**

Other urgent requests for testing can be discussed with a pathologist on a case-by-case basis.

Testing for COVID-19 is performed at University Hospital of Northern BC, Fort St. John Hospital and Mills Memorial Hospital microbiology labs during regular operating hours. Samples are processed in batches at regular intervals throughout the day. Requests received outside of microbiology department hours will be processed next day. Results will be available through regular reporting channels, including PowerChart or eHealth viewer.

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

Updated guidelines for COVID-19 viral testing can be found on the BCCDC website: http://www.bccdc.ca/Health-Professionals-Site/Documents/BCCDC_PHL_Updated_nCoV_Lab_Guidance.pdf

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

Code	Criteria/Category
HOSP	Hospitalized Symptomatic pregnant women in their 3 rd trimester Renal Patients Cancer Patients receiving treatment Emergency department with intent to admit
LTC	Resident of a long term care facility
OBK	Outbreaks, clusters or case contacts
HCW1	Health care worker – direct patient care
HCW2	Health care worker – indirect patient care
CMM	Community outpatients Primary Care Clinic or COVID-19 Collection Clinic Emergency Department (non-admitted) COVID-19 Surveillance
FN-CMM	First Nation Specific Locations due to remoteness <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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
CGT	People living in congregate settings such as work-camps, correctional facilities, shelters, group homes, assisted living and seniors' residences.
TRE	Tree Planters

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