

Date:	April 17, 2020
To:	NH Clinical Leadership and NH Medical Staff
From:	Dr. Ronald Chapman, VP Medicine, Penny Anguish, Chief Operating Officer Dr. Randy Dumont, NI Pathologist Dr. Kamran Azar, NH Lab Medical Lead
Cc:	NH Chief Operating Officers: Penny Anguish (NI), Ciro Panessa (NW), Angela De Smit (NE) Medical Directors: Dr. Shannon Douglas (NI Lakes/Omineca), Dr. Jaco Fourie (NW), Dr. Dietrich Furstenburg (NI Rural), Dr. Tony Preston (PG), Dr. Becky Temple (NE) NHEOC
Re:	Novel coronavirus (COVID-19) – COVID-19 IN-HOUSE TESTING

Northern Health Lab services has been working towards validating a COVID-19 assay for testing in-house. Beginning April 21st, testing for COVID-19 will be available for eligible patients within Northern Health. Initial testing will be performed at UHNBC, with forthcoming expansion to MMH and FSJH.

Due to a limited supply of test kits, testing will be limited to:

- Inpatients or patients likely to be admitted
- Residents of long term care facilities

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.

Samples that are not tested in-house will continue to be tested at LifeLabs.

Although a central provincial validation has been performed, we will be following the provincial standard to confirm initial test results at a reference lab. The first 20 negative and first 10 positive results will be reported as “Presumptive negative” and “Presumptive positive” with a comment stating that the result will be confirmed at a reference lab. After initial testing has been validated, remaining results will be reported following manufacturer and provincial recommendations. Results will be available through regular reporting channels, including PowerChart

Please continue use the Virology requisition and mark all requisitions and samples with priority in **RED**.

- HOSP** - hospitalized, nearly hospitalized, immunocompromised patients
- LTCF** - long term care facility resident (includes correction centers)
- OBK** - samples from a suspected outbreak
- HCW1** - health care worker - direct patient care
- HCW2** - health care worker - indirect patient care
- COMM** - community outpatient

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.