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To	All Medical Staff and Northern Health Clinical Leadership
From	Penny Anguish, NI COO and NH EOC Operational Lead Dr. Ronald Chapman, VP Medicine Northern Health Lisette Vienneau, Regional Director, Diagnostic Services Dr. Kamran Azar, Medical Lead, Laboratory Services
CC	Angela De Smit, NE Chief Operating Officer Ciro Panessa, NW Chief Operating Officer Northern Health Medical Directors, Northern Health EOC
Re	COVID-19 Outbreak Response – Laboratory Service Update

The purpose of reducing outpatient laboratory testing to essential services was primarily to minimize patient foot traffic into health care facilities for all but urgent diagnostics – this was part of an overall safety plan for patients and staff in the facility and followed direction that aligned with that taken by all BC Health Authorities. As the COVID-19 outbreak response evolves, and with less pressure on hospitals than anticipated from COVID positive admissions, the outpatient laboratory essential service criteria has been updated:

Criteria for Testing to be Completed	Notes
International Normalized Ratio (INR)	As required to monitor anticoagulant dosing
Therapeutic Drug Monitoring	e.g. Digoxin, immunosuppressant drugs, IV antibiotics
Oncology patients receiving active treatment therapy	All tests ordered
Prenatal blood work	Gestational Diabetes screening and other time sensitive requests
Essential Standing Orders for patients with chronic illness*	Tests required to inform treatment
Required for the diagnosis or treatment of an infectious or communicable disease (not routine screening)	e.g. Measles, STI testing
Any testing ordered as urgent	Tests required to inform immediate treatment
Non-essential tests ordered in conjunction with those above	Minimize visits/increase safety by doing all lab work on the same visit

* Expired standing orders are to be accepted during this phase. Non-essential standing orders should be postponed until after the restrictions are lifted.

Given the duration of phase 2 restrictions, process steps to be taken at this time include:

- 1) If the ordered test does not fall within the above criteria, but immediate treatment decisions are dependent on lab results, ordering physicians are to communicate the need to complete the testing on requisitions and/or to lab staff directly
- 2) All sites that also complete ECGs/Holter monitors are to designate staff to contact the ordering physicians on all requisitions currently on hold to review prioritization, both to book those that have become urgent and in anticipation of restrictions being eased in the near future

For further information please contact Medical Lead Dr. Kamran Azar or Lisette Vienneau, Regional Director of Diagnostic Services at Lisette.vienneau@northernhealth.ca