

Date:	May 6, 2020
To:	All Northern Health Staff
From:	Emergency Operations Centre (EOC) Dr. Ronald Chapman, VP Medicine, Northern Lead, Dr. Randy Dumont, NI Pathologist Dr. Kamran Azar, NH Lab Medical Lead Cathy Ulrich, CEO
Re:	Novel coronavirus (COVID-19) – COVID-19 In-House Testing Restrictions

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

Due to the ongoing limited supply of test kits, testing was initially limited to

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

However, we have seen an increase in demands beyond the 15 tests/day capacity.

Effective immediately, In-House testing will be restricted to

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

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.

Retesting and Samples that are not tested in-house will continue to be tested at Lifelabs.

Although a central provincial validation has been performed, we are still in the validation phase of the presumptive positive results and they are still being 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 to use the Virology requisition and **Mark** 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
- 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

Other community outpatients:

- 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