

TO: Clients of URMC Labs

FROM: Marilyn A. Menegus, Ph.D.
Associate Director, Clinical Microbiology Laboratories & Professor of Microbiology and Immunology, Department of Pathology and Laboratory Medicine
Phone: (585) 275-7735
E-mail: Marilyn_Menegus@URMC.Rochester.edu

SUBJECT: 2009 – 2010 Winter Respiratory Virus Season

DATE: November 2, 2009

Each year at this time we provide you with an updated review of laboratory test offerings for respiratory viruses. Starting November 2nd 2009, the SMH Clinical Laboratories will be replacing RSV and Influenza screening cultures with PCR. PCR is somewhat more sensitive and provides a significantly better turn around time. We plan to combine antigen detection and PCR to maximize the timeliness of our results.

TESTING

All specimens for Influenza and RSV screening will first be tested using antigen detection (EIA) assays. Specimens negative by EIA will be tested by a PCR (Prodesse ProFLU Plus) test that detects Influenza A, Influenza B and RSV. EIA and PCR tests can be performed on one VTM (viral transport media) tube containing 1-2 nasopharyngeal (NP) swabs. The EIA tests will be performed several times during the day and evening shifts, 7 days a week. PCR will be performed once or twice a day depending on the prevalence of influenza in the community with a 24 hour turn-around-time as our goal. Positive results will be phoned to the patient location. Negative results will be reported by computer only.

An additional PCR test is available to distinguish novel H1N1 Influenza A from other subtypes, e.g., seasonal Influenza. This PCR uses a CDC published protocol and is pending approval for our use by the NYS Dept of Health and will be available as an add-on request by calling Clinical Virology at 275-7801.

COMPREHENSIVE RESPIRATORY VIRUS CULTURE

Although we are discontinuing screening cultures for Influenza and RSV, we still offer a Comprehensive Respiratory Virus Culture that includes the ability to isolate the following: Influenza A and B, Parainfluenza, Respiratory Syncytial Virus, Adenovirus, Rhinovirus, Cytomegalovirus, Herpes Simplex Virus, Enterovirus and Varicella-Zoster Virus. Recommended specimens include NP swabs and/or pharyngeal swabs in Viral Transport Media (VTM), nasal or NP washes, or sputum in sterile containers. Although cultures are in progress for 14 days, most positive cultures are reported after 3 to 7 days in culture. One VTM tube containing 1-2 NP swabs contains adequate volume of specimen for a



MEDICINE of THE HIGHEST ORDER

Comprehensive Respiratory Virus culture and Influenza/RSV testing. Requests for this test can be ordered by selecting "Virus Culture" on a lab requisition.

SPECIMEN COLLECTION

Although washes and aspirates provide the best samples for respiratory virus testing, we realize that swabs are more easily obtained. To optimize swab collection we recommend the use of a flocked swab. This type of swab consists of nylon fibers that facilitate cell and liquid collection and transfer into Viral Transport Media (VTM). The plastic shafts of the swab are pre-scored for safe and easy break-off into Viral Transport Media. To obtain supplies please refer to the instructions below:

- *SMH Inpatients*: Obtain VTM and flocked swabs from the Microbiology Lab by calling (585) 275-7801
- *Off-site Clients*: Obtain VTM and flocked swabs by filling out a lab supply & document order form. Fax this form to (585) 295-9622 or call Client Services at (585) 350-2600, option 3.
- *Highland Hospital*: Obtain VTM and flocked swabs from the Microbiology Lab by calling (585) 341-6818. For additional information at Highland Hospital contact: [Woody Cichanowicz@urmc.rochester.edu](mailto:Woody.Cichanowicz@urmc.rochester.edu) Phone: (585) 341-6695

Copies of this memo are found at all web locations listed below. Intranet sites include links to respiratory virus activity graphs. The graphs show our laboratory data from week to week.

- Intranet URMC: FLUsource (under "Provider Guidance")
- Intranet Highland Hospital: FLUsource
- Public access: www.urmc.rochester.edu/pathology_lab_medicine/clinical_labs/ Refer to news and publications section.

For questions or additional information, please contact the Virology Lab supervisor, Cindy Mellen:

Phone: (585) 275-7801

E-Mail: [Cynthia Mellen@URMC.Rochester.edu](mailto:Cynthia.Mellen@URMC.Rochester.edu)



MEDICINE of THE HIGHEST ORDER