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SUBJECT: Herpes Simplex Virus PCR Available for Genital Lesions

DATE: 10/17/2012

On 9/24/2012, the URMCL Clinical Virology Lab began PCR testing of skin site specimens collected in viral transport medium for Herpes Simplex Virus (HSV). See link for more details:

http://www.urmc.rochester.edu/pathology_lab_medicine/clinical_labs/news_publications/documents/H_SVVZVPCRmemo.pdf

On 10/22/2012, the HSV PCR assay will be available for genital specimens as well. Our schedule for testing will become Monday - Saturday.

The HSV PCR specifically identifies HSV 1 and HSV 2 and has a limit of detection of 200 DNA copies/ml. Both the HSV PCR and VZV PCR (begun in July) are significantly more sensitive than culture.

The HSV and VZV PCR assays are in-house developed and NYS Department of Health approved using the Focus Diagnostics PCR reagents and the 3M Integrated Cyclor for amplification.

Culture for HSV is still available. Most positive HSV cultures are reported within the first 48 hours of incubation.

Until we complete our validation studies, PCR requests for specimens other than skin and genital sites (i.e. blood, CSF) will continue to be sent to our reference lab with a 1-3 day turnaround time.

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