

COVID-19 Laboratory Bulletin

April 9, 2020

Restricted testing for Influenza A and B in outpatients

This bulletin is being sent to

- Members of the Provincial Lab Emergency Operations Centre
- Health authority medical directors for pathology and laboratory medicine for further distribution to their medical staff
- Ordering providers via LifeLabs distribution
- Chief Medical Health Officers

Seasonal testing for FLUA/B/RSV is an important part of respiratory virus diagnosis and management. Samples submitted for COVID-19 testing through March have been co-tested for Influenza and COVID-19. The frequency of positive FLUA/B/RSV tests has fallen dramatically, from 20 per cent to two per cent, over the last two weeks of March.

Routine testing of for FLUA/B/RSV in outpatients is no longer indicated. The instruments and staff who perform FLUA/B/RSV testing in B.C., and some of the reagents, are also used for COVID-19 testing. Discontinuing routine FLUA/B/RSV in outpatients will save resources to support appropriate COVID-19 testing. These orders may be cancelled by the testing labs.

Please note:

Testing of inpatients and patients from long-term care facilities is still indicated as there are still outbreaks of FLUA/B/RSV being identified.

To facilitate testing clearly indicate on the requisition the priority and the tests requested.

- Example: LTCF – FLU A/B, RSV, and/or COVID-19 Testing

Outpatients can still be tested for FLUA/B/RSV if they are at high risk e.g. admission to hospital appears imminent, they are immunocompromised, have renal disease, or are pregnant women with respiratory disease.

To facilitate testing clearly indicate on the requisition the priority and the tests requested.

- Example: Renal Pt - FLU A/B, RSV, and/or COVID-19 Testing

Sent on behalf of the Provincial Lab Emergency Operations Centre:

- Pam Ramsay, Chief Administrative Officer, Provincial Laboratory Medicine Services; EOC co-chair
- Dr. Blake Gilks, Medical Lead, Provincial Lab EOC; EOC co-chair