



MEMORANDUM

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TO: Capital Health and Nova Scotia District Labs, Physicians, Clinics
FROM: CDHA and IWK Microbiology Laboratories
DATE: May 13, 2014
RE: Changes in Hepatitis C Confirmatory Testing

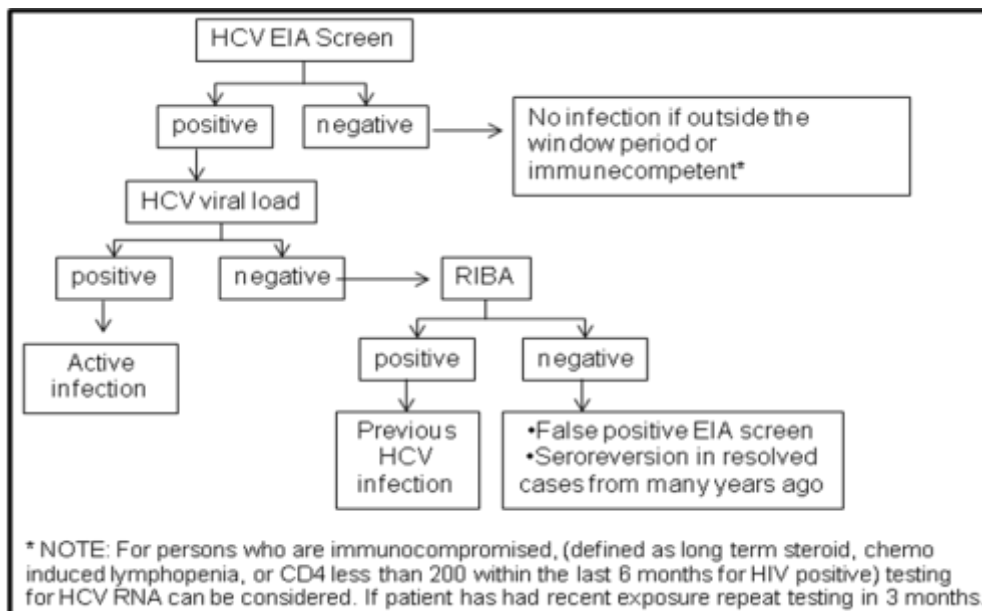
On June 2, 2014 Pathology and Laboratory Medicine’s Virology Laboratory will change the molecular method for confirming hepatitis C virus (HCV) infection. Quantitative real-time reverse transcriptase PCR (qRT-PCR), which is used to measure viral loads, will replace our currently used qualitative RT-PCR method.

Our validation has shown excellent correlation between the two methods. The only difference clinicians can expect to see is in how the results are reported. There will be no change in how the specimen is collected.

Positive results will be reported as a **quantitative value in Log IU/ml** - indicating the patient has circulating virus and is actively infected.

Negative results will be reported as **“HCV RNA not detected”** - indicating that there is no active HCV infection.

Patients with a negative result by qRT-PCR will continue to get further supplemental testing with the recombinant immunoblot assay (RIBA) to help differentiate a false positive EIA screening test from a resolved infection (see below).



This change will help streamline testing and offer improved turnaround times to help enhance patient care.

If you have any questions please do not hesitate to contact either Dr. Hatchette (473-6885) or Dr. LeBlanc (473-7698).