Memorandum

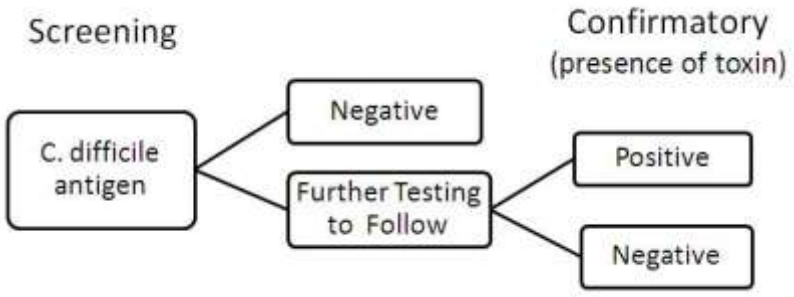
TO: Central Zone Physicians, Health Service Managers, Nursing Units, Clinics and NSHA Labs

FROM: Dr. Todd Hatchette / Dr Jason LeBlanc
Directors, Virology and Immunology Section
Pathology and Laboratory Medicine, Central Zone

DATE: May 14, 2015

RE: **Changes to Testing for *Clostridium difficile***

On May 25, 2015, the Microbiology laboratory will be changing the way specimens are tested for *Clostridium difficile* to an algorithm based approach using a screening method for *C. difficile* antigen, followed by confirmatory testing for presence of *C. difficile* toxin. The new testing algorithm will provide more rapid reporting of negative results and more accurate positive results.



- The only acceptable specimen type for *C. difficile* testing is **liquid stool in a dry sterile container**.
- Formed stool or specimens submitted in Cary-Blair media, formalin, or other preservatives will not be processed.
- Negative results for the *C. difficile* antigen screening assay will be reported immediately.
- Specimens positive for *C. difficile* antigen require confirmatory testing for the presence of toxin, since only toxin-producing strains of *C. difficile* cause disease.
- Confirmation of C*. difficile* toxin will be performed with the traditional method (cell culture cytotoxin neutralization assay) or molecular-based detection of toxin using PCR.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact the laboratory at (473-6881) or one of us.

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