



Capital Health

## MEMORANDUM

**TO:** Capital Health Physicians  
Health Service Manages  
Nursing Units and Clinics

**FROM:** Dr. Ross Davidson, Director of Bacteriology - Dept. of Microbiology

**DATE:** January 2015

**RE:** **Pre-incubation of Blood Culture Bottles**

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Blood cultures are frequently obtained from patients as part of their diagnostic work-up. The blood culture bottles are analyzed on a continuous monitoring system that relies on obtaining a base-line reading after the bottles have been placed on the instrument. Bottles containing significant bacterial growth prior to placement on the instrument result in an elevated base-line reading and interfere with the detection of positive cultures. Therefore, it is important that blood cultures be transported to the QE II Microbiology laboratory as quickly as possible.

Previously, some Capital Health laboratories pre-incubated their blood culture bottles at 35°C prior to transport to the QE II Microbiology lab. Unfortunately, bottles that have been pre-incubated at 35°C prior to placement on the blood culture instrument may significantly alter the system's ability to detect a positive culture.

**As a result, we are requesting that all blood culture specimens be transported without delay and at ROOM TEMPERATURE to the Microbiology laboratory.**

Any questions can be directed to me or the microbiologist-on-call. Thank you for your cooperation.

Yours sincerely,

Ross Davidson, Ph.D FCCM D (ABMM)  
Director, Bacteriology  
Division of Microbiology, Queen Elizabeth II HSC  
Associate Professor  
Microbiology & Immunology, Medicine and Pathology  
Dalhousie University