



Capital Health

MEMORANDUM

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To: Capital Health Clinics and Physicians
NS District Labs

From: Dr. Bassam Nassar
Chief of Service, Division of Clinical Chemistry

Ms. Shauna Thompson
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Date: June 19, 2012

Subject: Vitamin D Testing

We have identified, and our instrument manufacturer has confirmed, that the 25-dihydroxy vitamin D assay in our Laboratory has a 20%-25% lower detection capability than the reference method of tandem mass spectrometry. In practical terms, this means that levels close to the borderline desirable range, i.e. 75 nmol/L, were being reported lower by approximately 25%. While this may have led to advice to increase vitamin D supplementation in order to achieve a level above the 75 nmol/L cutoff, the modest increase in dosing would not be expected to expose patients to increases in vitamin D levels that exceed the upper limit of the desirable level (75-250 nmol/L) or place them in the toxic range (>500 nmol/L). In fact, with these increases in dose, patient levels are not expected to increase by more than 25% above the level detected by this assay.

Please note that we are actively working with the vendor to identify the root cause and improve the performance of the assay to acceptable levels. Another assay is being developed simultaneously, and in the interim, all Vitamin D specimens will be referred out of province for testing.

Our Pathology Informatics team is extracting information from our Lab Information System to identify for each physician a list of all patients for whom they requested Vitamin D testing. This information will be distributed to you as soon as it is available so that you will be able to determine if your patient requires retesting or an adjustment to their Vitamin D dose.

We thank you for your attention to this matter.

If you have any questions, please contact Dr. Bassam Nassar at (902) 473-2225, Bassam.Nassar@cdha.nshealth.ca or Shauna Thompson at (902) 473-4065, Shauna.Thompson@cdha.nshealth.ca or Faye Lively @ (902) 473-6387, faye.lively@cdha.nshealth.ca.

Cc. Dr. Amy Lou, Ms. Faye Lively, Ms. Sandy Schlay, Ms. Fran O'Brien, Dr. Godfrey Heathcote, Carrie Ricker