

## ***Pathology and Laboratory Medicine Memorandum***

---

To: Physicians and Health Service Directors, Central Zone

From: Dr Todd Hatchette, Chief of Service, Central Zone Microbiology  
Charles Heinstein, Manager, Central Zone Microbiology

Date: July 17, 2020

### **Subject Reopening of Suspended Microbiology Testing in Central Zone**

---

As of July 20, 2020, the Microbiology Laboratory at the QEII HSC will begin processing test requests for Herpes Simplex Virus (HSV), Varicella Zoster (VZV) and Norovirus that were suspended during the first wave of COVID-19. Given that a second wave of COVID-19 is expected, the distribution of both viral and Hologic Multi-test swabs (used for STI testing) will continue to be restricted. To conserve the inventory of swabs, the following recommendations are provided:

- Continue to submit urine specimens for women (including pregnant women) rather than vaginal swabs for general STI screening.
- The use of Hologic Multi-test swabs for screening of gonorrhea and chlamydia should be restricted to rectal and throat swabs in those for whom these sites are relevant based on sexual practices.
- 10 swabs will be distributed to requesting clinics at any one time, usage will be monitored.

To place orders for collection supplies please follow the instructions listed below;

- Viral transport swabs: fax the **Viral Transport Swab Kit Order Form** to the virology laboratory at 902-473-7971.
- Hologic Multi-test swabs (for STI screening of throat and rectal specimens): contact NSHA stores through the normal process using the Laboratory Form. The product order number is: **206939 – Swab Multi-test Specimen Collection**.

Note the following;

- Orders previous to July 20<sup>th</sup> will be cancelled and new orders must be placed.
- Orders will be released on a weekly basis.
- For questions related to swab delivery contact the customer service desk at 902-466-8070.

It is important to note that if the demand for COVID testing resurges, there may be an increase in turnaround time for testing results.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact the laboratory at 902-473-2120, Dr. Hatchette 902- 473-6885 or Charles Heinstein at 902-473-2231.