PHSA Laboratories

BCCDC Public Health Laboratory

October 25, 2021

RE: 2021/2022 Respiratory Virus Laboratory Testing

COVID-19 nucleic acid testing (NAT) will continue to be performed on all specimens submitted from clients (outpatients and inpatients) with compatible symptoms, contacts of those infected, and when requested by the MHO. In addition, influenza A, influenza B and respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) testing will be performed on specimens when requested as per routine seasonal practice.

In November 2021, the BCCDC Public Health Laboratory will implement a NAT test that simultaneously detects SARS-CoV-2/influenza A/influenza B/RSV for enhanced surveillance during the 2021/22 season. All samples submitted for COVID-19 testing will also be tested for influenza A/influenza B/RSV. When influenza A/influenza B/RSV testing is not requested, negative results will not be reported, while all positive influenza A/influenza B/RSV results will be reported. A proportion of the influenza A positive samples will be subtyped.

Otherwise influenza A/ influenza B/RSV testing is routinely recommended only for individuals:

- 1. Who are pregnant,
- 2. In a Long-Term Care (LTC) facility,
- 3. Who are part of an outbreak investigation,
- 4. Hospitalized or ill enough to be hospitalized,
- 5. Age <5 years.

If the COVID-19 and influenza A/influenza B/RSV NAT testing are negative, samples can be further tested using an extended respiratory pathogen panel for a wide range of respiratory pathogens but this will only be undertaken by request per the indications outlined above. Automatic reflexing to testing by this panel will not be performed, with the exception of samples from the Sentinel Practitioner Surveillance Network which will be routinely tested by the extended respiratory pathogen panel for surveillance purposes.

Specimen and Requisition Requirements

The preferred samples for COVID-19/influenza A/influenza B/RSV NAT testing are nasopharyngeal swabs/washes. Please note, only one sample needs to be collected for COVID-19, influenza A/influenza B/RSV and extended respiratory pathogen panel testing. Saline gargle samples have only been validated for the detection of SARS-CoV-2 and should not be submitted for influenza A/influenza B/RSV and extended respiratory pathogen panel testing requests.

Please use and complete the <u>Virology Requisition</u> (Version 3.1 07/2020) to order respiratory virus testing for each patient requiring testing (Appendix 1).



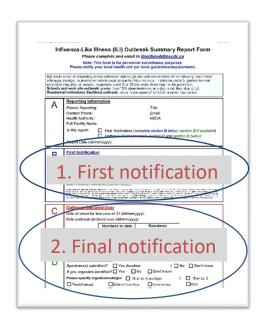
Influenza-like Illness Outbreak Reporting

This 2021/22 season we will suspend the use of the Influenza-Like Illness (ILI) **Outbreak** Laboratory form (ILI form). You may test as many patients as needed using the routine process for respiratory viral testing by submitting a completed Virology Requisition for each patient testing request.



Please continue to complete and submit the Influenza-Like Illness (ILI) Outbreak Summary Report Form (ILI Summary form) to notify BCCDC:

- 1) of suspected outbreaks
- when the outbreak is over and in Section D capture the causative organism and subtype.



Other Resources

Weekly respiratory virus testing and positive counts for BC are reported to PHAC via FluWatch and can be found here: https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/flu-influenza/influenza-surveillance/weekly-influenza-reports.html.

BC-specific influenza surveillance bulletins are routinely produced by the BCCDC and can be found here: http://www.bccdc.ca/health-professionals/data-reports/communicable-diseases/influenza-surveillance-reports

ILI Outbreak summary report form: http://www.bccdc.ca/resource-gallery/Documents/Guidelines%20and%20Forms/Forms/Epid/Influenza%20and%20Respiratory/OutbreakReport Form_2018.pdf

For other testing details, please refer to the BCCDC Public Health Laboratory test menu on eLab: http://www.elabhandbook.info/phsa/.

Sincerely,

Mel Krajden, MD, FRCPC Public Health Laboratory Director BC Centre for Disease Control Agatha Jassem, PhD (D)ABMM FCCM Head Virology/Molecular Diagnostics BCCDC Pubic Health Laboratory



PHN is	655 West 12th Avenue, Vand www.bccdc.ca/publichealth				VIFOIO	gy Requisiti	LAB	
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