

**LABORATORY ALLIANCE** of Central New York, LLC

## ***Clostridium difficile* Test Ordering**

**TO:** Health Care Providers

**FROM:** Paul A. Granato, PhD  
Director of Microbiology

**DATE:** February 22, 2010

In August of 2009, the Microbiology department of Laboratory Alliance of Central New York introduced the use of a new PCR assay for the detection of ***Clostridium difficile*** toxin B in fecal samples. This molecular-based, amplification assay replaced our less-sensitive EIA method. Clinical evaluation and published reports on this new assay have shown conclusively that this PCR test is superior to any method, including cytotoxin assay, for establishing the diagnosis of ***C. difficile*** disease and represents the new “gold standard” of laboratory testing for the diagnosis of this infection.

Our experience at Laboratory Alliance confirms the scientific reports published in the medical literature. Specifically, in October of 2008, our stool specimen positivity rate for ***C. difficile*** testing was 8% (55/664) using the less sensitive EIA method. In October of 2009, our specimen positivity rate increased to 19% (92/484) using the new “gold standard” PCR assay. This upgrade in improved technology resulted in a 137% increase in the detection of positive specimens compared to the same time period the previous year when the less sensitive EIA method was used.

The significance of this upgrade in ***C. difficile*** testing is that there is no need to submit more than one stool sample to screen patients for ***C. difficile*** disease. Submission of more than one sample for this test request results in unnecessary health care costs. **Because of this, the Microbiology department of Laboratory Alliance of Central New York will no longer accept more than one stool sample on a patient for *C. difficile* testing.** On occasion there may be exception to this rule which can be arranged by contacting the Microbiology laboratory.

If you have any questions or concerns about this policy, please contact Mr. Russell Rawling, Manager of the Microbiology section (315-410-7060).

1304 Buckley Road • Syracuse, New York 13212-4302 • 315.453.7200