



HIV Testing Algorithm Changes

Beginning February 24, 2016, Laboratory Alliance of Central New York will implement changes to specimen type, reporting and testing algorithm for routine HIV screening (order code HIV12). Please note that the automated chemiluminescent test used (Ortho VITROS 3600) remains the same, but that the preferred sample type will change from serum (gold top or SST tube) to EDTA plasma. The reason for the change is to meet the appropriate sample requirements for the series of tests used to confirm a positive HIV screen. The CDC testing algorithm recommends NAT (nucleic acid testing by PCR) when the screen is positive and neither HIV1 nor HIV2 antibody is detected in the differentiation test. The change to EDTA plasma will allow PCR to be performed directly from the existing sample, which should in turn create a positive impact on patient management. No additional order will need to be placed by the provider; no follow-up specimen will need to be collected if the initial specimen quantity is sufficient for the full testing algorithm.

In addition to the change to EDTA plasma, in order to accommodate the specimen volume requirements for the supplemental testing, we are requesting that a dedicated 6-mL pink tube be submitted for all routine (automated) HIV screen requests.

Additionally, per mandate of the New York State Department of Health, there will be a minor change to the terminology used to report routine (automated) HIV screens. Currently, results are reported as either "REACTIVE – PRELIMINARY REACTIVE" or "NEGATIVE". Beginning February 24, 2016, screen results will be reported as either REACTIVE or NEGATIVE.

Furthermore, the CDC and the NYS Department of Health Bureau of HIV AIDS Epidemiology require the laboratory to report patient race and ethnicity along with positive HIV screen results. Acceptable choices are listed in the table below and should be indicated on the HIV requisition submitted with the specimen.

Race

American Indian or Alaska Native
Asian
Black or African American
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
White

Ethnicity

Hispanic or Latino
Non-Hispanic

Questions regarding HIV testing may be directed to Cheryl Haskins, MS, MT(ASCP)SC, Manager, Chemistry and Referral Testing, at 315-410-7014 or cherylhaskins@lacny.com.

Reference:

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Quick Reference Guide — Laboratory testing for the diagnosis of HIV infection: updated recommendations (June 27, 2014). <http://stacks.cdc.gov/view/cdc/23446>

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