

March 19, 2020

SJMHS Colleagues and Medical Staff,

With the rapidly changing situation regarding Covid-19 testing, we have been actively engaged in identifying additional testing capacity. This update is intended to detail access to testing through SJMHS Clinical Laboratories. Beginning today, March 18, 2020, Covid-19 testing will be routed to Quest Diagnostics from our local reference laboratory Warde Medical Laboratory (WML).

Current testing from Quest Diagnostics:

- *Turn-Around-Time:* Monday-Friday 1-2 days, Saturday-Sunday 2-3 days. The longer turn-around time on weekends is related to transportation limitations during that time. However, WML is looking to close the gap with an additional shipment on Sundays. **If the patient is unstable during this period, the Bureau of Laboratories (BOL) at the Michigan Department of Health and Human Service (MDHHS) Laboratory should be contacted for testing at (517) 335-8165. They require a Patient Under Investigation (PUI) form to be completed.**
- *Specimen Requirements:* One Viral Transport Media (VTM) containing only a Nasopharyngeal (NP) swab. Oropharyngeal swabs (OP) are no longer required. Some test kits will come pre-packaged with both an NP and OP, while others will come only with an NP. **PLEASE ONLY SUBMIT THE NP.** Placing both swabs into the VTM may critically reduce the amount media and desiccate the specimen.
- *Number of specimens to submit:* Maximum 1 viral transport specimen with ONLY an NP swab. If flu testing is needed, we will use the media from the single VTM for outpatients and a dry swab for ER flu tests. With a shortage of available VTM tubes, we are seeking to conserve media.
- *Additional tests to order:* We recommend NOT routinely ordering the Respiratory Panel, as it does not provide much actionable value over the flu test. We recommend considering flu testing.
- *How to Order:* If ordering in Epic, the Covid-19 test can be ordered as EPIC LAB7883 "SARS-CoV-2 RNA, qualitative real-time RT PCR". The Epic order states two swabs are required. Please disregard the OP swab; we will work to have the order corrected. If not interfaced to Epic, order the test as a MISC and write "COVID 19 testing, Warde"
- *Results:* Results will be reported through usual reporting mechanisms. Results will be available in Epic and interfaced EMRs. Positive results will be called to Non-ER providers.
- *How to transport:* Refrigerate the VTM tube. Do not freeze the specimen.
- *Who should be tested:* At this point, there is not enough capacity to offer widespread screening so testing should be limited according to screening guidelines.

Please be aware that the Covid-19 testing situation is complex and fluid, and these instructions are current for today. Our goal is to complement testing from commercial laboratories, by bringing limited, rapid Covid-19 testing in-house for patients requiring admission and for medical staff. We are working as quickly

as we can to develop rapid in-house testing, however, this will take 4-6 weeks and we will up-date you when in-house testing becomes available. [See attached VISUAL for reference.](#)

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