CHANGE OF SERVICE

DATE: January 22, 2010

TO: Housestaff and PCN Physicians, Faculty, and Nursing Personnel

FROM: Christopher R. Polage, MD
Director, Microbiology Laboratory

RE: Discontinuation of Nasopharyngeal (NP) Swab as source for Respiratory Viral DFA or Culture

In November 2009, a new test for respiratory viruses, the RESPIRATORY VIRAL PANEL BY RT-PCR (LABP000185), became available through the UCDHS Clinical Laboratory. This molecular test panel detects 10 common respiratory viruses with faster time to results and overall better sensitivity than the traditional cell culture method resulting in improved quality of care. As part of the transition to this new method, NP swab is now being discontinued as an acceptable source for DFA or viral cell culture.

Effective February 1, 2010, nasopharyngeal (NP) swab specimens will no longer be accepted for testing for the following tests:

- RESPIRATORY VIRUS DFA & CULTURE (MICG000069)
- CULTURE ENT, VIRAL (MICG000017)

The preferred test for detection of respiratory viruses from NP swab specimens is the RESPIRATORY VIRAL PANEL BY RT-PCR (LABP000185). On February 10, 2010, NP swab will be removed from EPIC as an orderable source for the above orderable tests. Thereafter, NP swab orders for DFA or viral cell culture (specific tests listed above) will be cancelled and reordered by the Clinical Laboratory as the RESPIRATORY VIRAL PANEL BY RT-PCR (LABP000185).

Other respiratory specimen types (e.g., nasopharyngeal wash, nasopharyngeal aspirate, endotracheal aspirate (ETA), brocho-alveolar lavage (BAL) will continue to be processed by DFA and viral cell culture until further notice.

These changes are intended to improve patient care. Please call the Microbiology Laboratory at 916-734-2544 or the Molecular Lab at 734-1670 with any questions.

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