



STATE OF MICHIGAN
DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY HEALTH
LANSING

RICK SNYDER
GOVERNOR

JAMES K. HAVEMAN
DIRECTOR

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Dear Hepatitis C Virus test submitter,

The Michigan Department of Community Health (MDCH) Bureau of Laboratories has made changes to our testing algorithms for Hepatitis C virus (HCV) based on guidelines from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Beginning November 1, 2013 HCV testing will now consist of two tests, a serologic screening test and a molecular test.

The serologic screening test detects the presence of antibody to HCV, but does not differentiate between past infection, current infection, or possible false-positive results. Any patient that demonstrates antibody to HCV will automatically receive the molecular-based testing. The molecular test detects the presence of circulating Hepatitis C virus in the patient's blood and confirms current HCV infection.

In order to perform testing according to the new algorithm, **specimens must be stored and transported at 2 to 8°C or be frozen**. Any specimen that is not cold when received at MDCH laboratory will be screened for antibody to HCV, but antibody-positive specimens will be reported as **unsatisfactory for molecular testing**.

To assist with transport of cold (or frozen) specimens, MDCH will offer a new specimen collection kit, Unit 8A. This kit will provide two ice packs that should be removed and kept frozen until ready to package the specimen for shipment. The kit can be ordered either by calling the MDCH Lab Support Services at (517) 335-9040 or by completing a clinical specimen shipping unit requisition found at http://www.michigan.gov/documents/dch-0568_7396_7.pdf and faxing the form to (517) 335-9039.

Currently HCV testing is performed and collection kits are provided free of charge by MDCH. Testing is intended to support local public health departments and partners who perform testing associated with MDCH projects and programs. As the testing volume for HCV expands and as the Affordable Care Act is implemented, MDCH may elect to provide HCV testing on a fee-for-service basis for some or all clients.

If you have any questions about the new Hepatitis C testing, please call the Bureau of Laboratories at 517-335-8063 Monday through Friday during business hours.

Thank you,

Sandip Shah, Ph.D.
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