



CITY OF HOUSTON
Department of Health and Human Services

Bill White

Mayor

April 10, 2009

Dear Colleague:

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The purpose of this letter is to inform you of updated Houston Department of Health and Human Services (HDHHS) laboratory protocols regarding the screening of HIV-2. The HDHHS has begun implementation of a third generation EIA, the Bio-Rad Genetic Systems HIV-1/HIV-2 Plus O test kit, to screen all samples submitted for HIV screening for the antibody presence to both HIV-1 and HIV-2. The test kit is FDA approved, is performed on an automated enzyme immunoassay platform, and has passed all regulatory standards for screening serum and plasma for these antibodies.

Agencies submitting HIV specimens to the HDHHS laboratory should begin seeing a revised laboratory report form for HIV results reflecting the additional screening for HIV-2 antibodies. Previous language on the HDHHS laboratory report form for HIV results indicated the test name as "HIV1 Antibody EIA" which will be replaced with the following new test name: "Anti HIV-1/HIV-2 Antibody EIA".

If an agency has a reason to suspect HIV-2 infection, the HDHHS laboratory will facilitate confirmation testing which must be done by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) in Atlanta, Georgia. Confirmation testing for HIV-2 requires whole blood submission, and the process for an agency to follow when HIV-2 infection is suspected is as follows:

- 1) The agency will notify HIV surveillance at (713) 794-9441 when an HIV-2 infection is suspected.
- 2) The agency will immediately contact the Virology Section of the HDHHS laboratory at (713) 558-3461 or (713) 558-3460. The HDHHS laboratory **MUST** be notified at least **TWO** days prior to a sample being submitted to the CDC for processing.
- 3) The HDHHS laboratory will determine which type of confirmation should be requested: PCR (DNA or RNA) Sequencing or Virus Isolation.
- 4) The agency will collect an additional sample in a lavender top plasma tube or any PPT that is **NOT** heparin coated and uses EDTA or ACD as the anti-coagulant for submission to the CDC.
- 5) The agency will submit the additional sample to the HIV processing unit in the Virology Section of the HDHHS laboratory **no later than 1:00 PM** on the day the sample is collected. This is necessary because the CDC must receive the sample for processing the next day, i.e. the day after the sample is collected.
- 6) Reference testing results usually take 7-10 business days to report.

For further questions or clarifications, please contact Shannon York, Microbiologist III, at (713)-558-3461 or Cynthia Turner, Virology Supervisor, at (713) 558-3460 or cynthia.turner@cityofhouston.net.

Sincerely,

Handwritten signature of Sudha Pottumarthy in black ink.

Sudha Pottumarthy MD, FRCPA, D(ABMM)
Acting Bureau Chief
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Handwritten signature of Marlene McNeese-Ward in black ink.

Marlene McNeese-Ward
Bureau Chief
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