

LABORATORY OUTREACH UPDATE JANUARY 2009

PERTUSSIS PCR TESTING CHANGE

Effective immediately, Bordetella pertussis testing is no longer being performed locally. Therefore we will be forwarding these specimens to Mayo Medical Laboratories.

Unfortunately, this will necessitate a change in specimen collection and storage. We have different collection/transport swabs available that must be used. These kits contain the Amies transport media with charcoal and can only be obtained from Bellin Health Laboratory. The presence of the charcoal is imperative. This gives the transport media a black color. A dry swab, which is what you may have been using in the past, or any other transport media, is not an acceptable specimen and Mayo will not perform the testing.

The kit also contains a small tipped rayon swab with an aluminum shaft that can be used for collection. The actual collection technique has not changed and can be found on-line in our laboratory catalog of service. The catalog can be found in one of three places: on the Bellin Health intranet under References/On-Line References, on the internet site (www.bellin.org) under “Bellin Links” and “Bellin Health Outreach Laboratory”, or you may also access the catalog when you are in a Meditech session by clicking on the “External Links “ (small round icon on the right side tool bar) and choosing the Bellin/Mayo Test Catalog.

There will also be a price and CPT code change put into effect immediately. The base client price will be lowered from \$133.35 to \$110.06. The CPT code will change from 87798 to 87801. Turn around time should remain at 24 to 48 hours.

Please contact our Outreach Laboratory at 433-3652 or 1-800-236-1639 to order the appropriate transport kit. Outdates are about one-year.

TROPONIN TESTING –AUTOMATIC CALL-BACK CHANGE

Effective January 5, 2009 the automatic call-back level (critical results) for Troponin testing has been changed. Previously, the provider was contacted when the Troponin was > or = 0.12 ng/mL. The updated level is > or = 0.5 ng/mL.

OBSOLETE TEST - MUCIN CLOT TEST – SYNOVIAL FLUID

Effective January 15, 2009 Bellin Health Laboratory will no longer be providing the mucin clot test for synovial fluid. This is a rarely requested test that is no longer considered clinically applicable.

PAP AND HPV COLLECTION TIPS

We have recently received questions from providers regarding the pap diagnosis of “Unsatisfactory for evaluation”. We realize a diagnosis of unsatisfactory is undesirable and we do everything possible to avoid this diagnosis. That being said we are required by strict guidelines in the Bethesda reporting system and by CLIA as well as our accrediting agencies to only give a diagnosis on a specimen that is Satisfactory.

Unsatisfactory specimens are usually due to insufficient cells. This can be caused by an insufficient number of cells in the vial, obscuring blood, inflammation or other noncellular debris (usually lubricant), that cover the thin prep filter during processing and causes the condition where cells are not applied to the slide surface. In order to decrease the unsatisfactory pap diagnosis it may be helpful to review the collection techniques for thin prep paps.

1. Remove excess blood, mucus or inflammation before taking the sample. (a gauze pad or swab will work best for this)
2. Avoid the use of any lubricants. If necessary, it is suggested you use of warm water to lubricate the speculum.
3. Do not over-rotate the endocervical brush. Slowly rotating $\frac{1}{4}$ to $\frac{1}{2}$ turn in one direction is sufficient
4. Be sure to immediately rinse the collection device in the vial (vigorously) when collection is complete. Delay of this step will cause the specimen to fix on the device and the cells will not remain in the vial.
5. Avoid collection of pap specimens during menses. Specimens will usually be very bloody and will most likely be diagnosed “unsatisfactory for evaluation.”

Additional note on HPV testing:

1. If insufficient quantity of specimen remains for HPV testing after processing the pap, we are adding a comment to the report. This should be helpful for our providers as a way of knowing if they can expect an HPV result. In addition you will know if enough specimen remains for you to add an HPV test that was not initially requested.
2. If HPV testing only is requested, please use a Digene swab (available from Bellin Health Outreach Laboratory). Please do not use a thin prep vial for collection of HPV only. Thin prep supplies are purchased in kit form so using them for the collection of HPV testing only increases the cost of providing the test to your facility. Please do not use them for this purpose.

Please call Bellin Health Cytology if you have any questions at 920-433-3726 or email tmkipp@bellin.org

QUANTIFERON “TB GOLD”

Please take note that you must collect two green top tubes for quantiferon testing. Specimen requirements call for a minimum of 6 ml of whole blood.

PAP TESTING AS SCREENING TOOL

The College of American Pathologists, a regulating body for clinical laboratories instituted a policy requiring all laboratories to educate their clinicians regarding the Pap smear.

The Pap test is a SCREENING test for cervical cancer with an inherent false negative rate. This false negative rate may be due to various reasons some of which are: poor sampling, interpretation discrepancies, obscuring factors or screening errors. While we can attempt to eliminate all of these reasons it would be virtually impossible due to the “human element” of the test. Please be aware that since the pap is a screening test it should not be the only means used to determine patient care and follow up. Patient symptoms or complaints as well as the physical exam must be given priority over a negative pap result.

Please feel free to contact us at Bellin Cytology if you have any questions. Our phone number is (920) 433-3726.

ALLERGY TESTING, HEPATITIS TESTING AND AMERICHOICE MA

Please be aware that Americhoice (a Medical Assistance HMO) has put it’s own reimbursement policies in place for both allergy (RAST) testing and Hepatitis testing. What this means is that if you send this testing to our laboratory and we bill Americhoice for you, you must provide the proper diagnosis codes for payment or the testing will be billed to your account. You can find these policies listed on our internet site – www.bellin.org. Go to the “Bellin Links” tab, find the entry for Bellin Health Outreach Laboratory and then proceed to the references.

Please call Bellin Health Outreach Laboratory with any questions.

NGS POLICIES AND VARIOUS TESTING

Please be aware that National Government Services (fiscal intermediary for Medicare) has implemented reimbursement policies for the following tests: Acid Phosphatase, BNP, Erythrocyte Sedimentation Rate, High Sensitivity C-Reactive Protein, Homocysteine, and Magnesium. These policies are posted to the policies section of our internet site as outlined in the previous section of this newsletter.

PHLEBOTOMY DVD AVAILABLE

Mayo Medical Laboratories has provided us with copies of a DVD entitled “Fundamentals of Phlebotomy”. Copies are available by contacting Bellin Health Outreach Laboratory at 920-433-3652. The 58-minute video covers basic techniques as well as strategies for difficult draws. Also included are patient and employee safety topics.