

COVID-19 Update

September 3: Virology Testing Update

Today's issue features an update on virology testing from Northwestern Memorial HealthCare Senior Vice President Daniel M. Derman, MD.

VIROLOGY TESTING

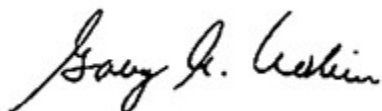
The testing volume continues to surpass 2,000 tests per day. With constant adjustments in the allocation of supplies, there may be an impact on the testing platforms used to test each patient population across NM. Inpatient and pre-procedure testing will be prioritized, and outpatient testing may experience a slight increase in turnaround times. Some outpatient samples are sent to Quest Diagnostic labs for processing, and these samples are generally processed within 48 hours of reaching the lab.

Nasal swabs have been validated as an approved collection method for outpatient testing of SARS-CoV-2 for asymptomatic patients. Nasal swabs provide a less invasive collection method than nasopharyngeal (NP) swabs, and the NM Lab is working to implement nasal swab collection for outpatient testing of asymptomatic patients at all NM testing sites by Tuesday, September 8. NP swabs will continue to be used for inpatient testing, pre-procedure testing and outpatient testing of symptomatic patients. A study is underway to validate the use of nasal swabs in additional patient populations. Saliva testing also is being evaluated as a potential option.

Currently, three antigen testing platforms are under evaluation by the NM Lab. Antigen testing is a new type of diagnostic test designed for the rapid detection of SARS-CoV-2. Because of its decreased sensitivity, antigen testing is being evaluated to determine appropriate clinical use. More information will be shared once it is available.

The **COVID-19 Order Matrix** and **Ambulatory COVID Testing Order Placement and Result Follow-up Tip Sheet** were recently updated to incorporate changes in the testing process. To review these updates and for additional information about COVID-19 testing, please visit the links above, and the **Testing Resources page** on Physician Forum or the **Testing Resources page** on NM Interactive.

Thank you to all NM physicians and clinicians for your ongoing commitment, collaboration and leadership in providing exceptional *Patients First* care.



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