

**PROVINCIAL LABORATORY SERVICES**  
**COMMUNIQUÉ**

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**TO:** Physicians, Nurse Practitioners, Directors of Nursing, Nurse Managers, Clinical Instructors/Educators, and Infections Control Nurses.  
**FROM:** Dr. Greg German, Division Head of Microbiology Services  
**DATE:** January 14, 2016  
**RE:** **Viral Respiratory Upgrades, Utilization, and Surveillance**

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1. Upgrades:

- Viral respiratory PCR replaces the previous Influenza A/B PCR orderable and will test for three viruses: Influenza A, B, and RSV.
- The on-Island testing frequency will increase to 5 days a week during Flu season with STAT testing more readily available for the weekend or holiday after approval by the medical microbiologist or pathologist on call.
- RSV testing using the less sensitive immunocard method will still be available as a STAT test for this year.

2. Utilization: The Viral Respiratory Panel tests for 13 different respiratory viruses (including Influenza A/B and RSV) and is done off-Island in Halifax. In alignment with Halifax's guidelines, we will reduce our testing of viral respiratory panels especially in the paediatric population where it was ordered routinely.

- Adult patients identified in the order comments as immunocompromised, in the ICU, or in discussion with the medical microbiologist will be processed initially by the viral respiratory PCR and if negative will have the panel done.
- Paediatric patients will also be processed as above for adults as well as if ordered by a Paediatrician and the order comments indicate "Very sick" or "Peds Group." Then in those situations the panel will be done regardless of the on-Island PCR result.

3. Website / Email for Viral Respiratory Surveillance: To improve knowledge of local burden of viral respiratory illness, our website [www.healthpei.ca/micro](http://www.healthpei.ca/micro) will publish results of our respiratory testing during the season and will be updated weekly. If you would prefer to be emailed please contact our Molecular Technologist Richard Keenan at [RJKeenan@ihis.org](mailto:RJKeenan@ihis.org). The Public Health Agency of Canada has a national viral respiratory surveillance program which can be accessed by searching for: "Canada weekly influenza reports" and will be linked within the local data report for easier access.

**Cc:** Dr. Todd Hachette (Chief, Division of Microbiology Capital District Health Authority)  
Dr. Heather Morrison  
Dr. Carolyn Sanford

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**FOR MORE INFORMATION PLEASE CONTACT:**

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