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Subject: New HIV testing algorithm

Idaho Bureau of Laboratories (IBL) will be performing HIV testing according to the approved algorithm published by the Clinical and Laboratory Standards Institute® in June, 2011. HIV samples submitted to IBL will be tested with the 4th generation BioRad GS HIV Ag/Ab Combo (1/2) assay that detects antibodies to HIV-1, HIV-2, and/or HIV-1 p24 antigen. This new more sensitive test will enable the detection of HIV earlier in the course of the infection because the HIV-1 p24 antigen circulates before antibodies develop. Results of this screening test are reported as "Nonreactive" or "Reactive" with the following clarifying comment: "Results from the GS HIV Combo Ag/Ab EIA cannot be used to distinguish between the presence of HIV-1 p24 antigen, HIV-1 antibody, or HIV-2 antibody in a sample."

Repeatedly reactive samples will be reflexed to the BioRad Multispot HIV1/HIV2 screening test to distinguish between HIV-1 and HIV-2 antibodies. Multispot test results will be reported as "Nonreactive for HIV-1 and HIV-2 antibody;" "Reactive for HIV-1 antibody;" "Reactive for HIV-2 antibody;" or "Reactive for HIV (undifferentiated)."

If the screening test is repeatedly reactive and the MultiSpot test is nonreactive, then the sample will be reflexed to HIV RNA testing and will include the comment: "Result cannot rule-out acute HIV infection. Sample reflexed for HIV RNA testing." Qualitative HIV RNA test results will be reported as "HIV RNA detected" or "HIV RNA not detected."

If you have any questions about the new testing algorithm please contact Lisa Smith, Clinical Microbiology Section Manager at (208) 334-2235 x 228 or SmithL2@dhw.idaho.gov.

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