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Ministry of Health

Ministry of Long-Term Care

Ontario Health Insurance Plan

INFOBulletin

2023-2024 Community Access Pilot for Laboratory Services

The pilot list of no-cost laboratory services available to patients at community laboratories will continue in 2023-24

To: Ordering Clinicians (Medical Practitioners, Dentists, Midwives, Registered Nurses in the Extended Class, as applicable pursuant to Ontario Regulation 45/22 under the *Laboratory and Specimen Collection Centre Licensing Act*)

Category: Physician Services, Primary Health Care Services, Dentist Services, Midwife Services, Registered Nurse in the Extended Class

Written by: Laboratories and Diagnostics Branch, Health Programs and Delivery Division

Date issued: March 29, 2023

Bulletin Number: 230306

Overview

The Community Access Pilot for Laboratory Services will be extended to the 2023-24 fiscal year with no changes to the current ordering practices for ordering clinicians.

Any ordering clinician in Ontario (as defined for specimen collection and laboratory testing in Ontario Regulation 45/22 under the *Laboratory and Specimen Collection Centre Licensing Act*) can request services included in the Pilot by using the existing ordering practices that are currently in-place.

The services that are included are:

- **Category 1 Services:** Patients can have their specimens collected at a community laboratory for any genetic tests performed in a laboratory listed in Table 1.
- **Category 2 Services:** Patients can have the tests listed in Table 2 performed by a community laboratory.

Participation in the Community Access Pilot for Laboratory Services is voluntary. The ministry encourages providing this pathway to testing for patients when appropriate to help connect patients with care closer to home.

Any specimen collections requiring specialized or complex ordering and/or

handling requirements should continue to be collected in the appropriate setting (example: hospital).

Additional details about participating in the Community Access Pilot for Laboratory Services can be found below.

Category 1 Services

There is no change for clinicians or patients.

Clinicians can continue their current ordering practice when completing a requisition form for genetic testing.

Patients needing any genetic testing for that will be tested at a laboratory listed in Table 1 will continue to have the option of taking their requisition form to a community laboratory (or the Specimen Collection Centre it owns or operates).

Please note: patients should be referred to have their specimens collected at a community laboratory only if it is a routine collection with no special collection methodologies.

Table 1: Molecular Genetics & Cytogenetics Laboratories

#	Hospital/Program Name
1	London Health Sciences Centre
2	Hamilton Health Sciences Corp
3	Trillium Health Partners
4	University Health Network
5	The Hospital for Sick Children
6	Sinai Health System
7	Sunnybrook Health Sciences Centre
8	Unity Health Toronto
9	North York General Hospital
10	Lakeridge Health
11	Kingston Health Sciences Centre
12	The Ottawa Hospital
13	Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario
14	Health Sciences North
15	Newborn Screening Ontario (NSO) Molecular Laboratory
16	The National Inherited Bleeding Disorder Genotyping Laboratory

17	William Osler Health System-Brampton Civic Hospital
18	Lakeridge Health Oshawa
19	St. Joseph's Healthcare

Category 2 Services

There is no change for clinicians or patients.

Clinicians can continue their current practices when completing the requisition for tests listed in Table 2.

Patients will be able to continue to have these tests performed by a community laboratory at no-cost.

The ordering clinician should only refer patients to have their specimens collected at a community laboratory according to the criteria in Table 2

Table 2: List of Services

Name of Test	Collection and/or Testing	Clinical Indications for Ordering
Trichomonas – Nucleic Acid Amplification Test (NAAT)	Testing Only	Polymerase Chain Reaction (PCR) test (NAAT) only-no changes to existing clinical guidance.
Gonorrhea (NAAT)	Testing Only	PCR test (NAAT) only-no changes to existing clinical guidance.
Chlamydia (NAAT)	Testing Only	PCR test (NAAT) only-no changes to existing clinical guidance.
C. difficile-EIA stool antigen and Toxin A/B	Testing Only	Enzyme Immunoassay (EIA) as initial screen. If EIA results for antigen and toxin A/B are concordant, confirmatory NAAT is not needed.
C. difficile-Confirmatory (NAAT)	Testing Only	NAAT for confirmatory testing only.
Apolipoprotein B	Collections and Testing	As per the 2021 Canadian Cardiovascular Society (CCS) Guidelines < https://www.onlinecjc.ca/action/showPdf?pii=S0828-282X%2821%2900165-3 >
Lipoprotein a [Lp(a)]	Collections and Testing	As per the 2021 Canadian Cardiovascular Society (CCS) Guidelines < https://www.onlinecjc.ca/action/showPdf?pii=S0828-282X%2821%2900165-3 >
Celiac tissue Transglutaminase Immunoglobulin A (tTG-IgA)	Collections and Testing	For the purposes of the Pilot, should be ordered for the diagnosis of celiac disease only with the following criteria: Indicated in clients over 2 years of age.

		• Should only be tested while client is on a gluten containing diet. If client is <u>IgA</u> deficient (see "serum <u>IgA</u>" test below), additional testing required will not be funded through this Pilot.
Celiac serum <u>IgA</u>	Collections and Testing	Used alongside Celiac <u>tTG-IgA</u> to determine whether a client is <u>IgA</u> deficient.
N-Terminal-pro hormone B-type Natriuretic Peptide (NT-proBNP)	Collections and Testing	Clinically indicated only in clients with suspected heart failure.

Additional Information

The Community Access Pilot for Laboratory Services will continue from April 1, 2023, to March 31, 2024. The data collected will contribute to healthcare system planning efforts.

The ministry will continue to maintain a Questions & Answers ("Q&A") document to support the implementation of the Community Access Pilot for Laboratory Services. It will be updated as needed and shared with community laboratories and implementation partners upon request to the ministry at

CommunityLabs@ontario.ca <<mailto:CommunityLabs@ontario.ca>> .

Keywords/Tags

Community Access Pilot; Community Laboratories; Laboratory Services; Patient Access

Contact Information

Do you have questions about this INFOBulletin? [Email the Service Support Contact Centre](mailto:SSContactCentre.MOH@ontario.ca) <<mailto:SSContactCentre.MOH@ontario.ca>> or call 1-800-262-6524.

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