

To: All Healthcare Providers, Nursing, and Pharmacists

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RE: **Implementation of HSV and VZV PCR at Women & Infants' Microbiology Laboratory**

We are happy to announce that *on June 5,2023* the Microbiology Laboratory at Women and Infants Hospital will begin offering PCR testing for Herpes Simplex Virus (HSV) and Varicella Zoster Virus (VZV). This updated workflow will dramatically improve the current turnaround times for these test orders. Our hope is that by providing quality, expedited HSV and VZV results, physicians will be able to make informed decisions sooner concerning the best treatment and management options for their patients.

Due to the clearance currently granted by the FDA, HSV/VZV PCR assays are cleared for only two specimen types. These include 1) **Cerebrospinal Fluid (CSF)** and 2) **Cutaneous and Mucocutaneous Swabs (Lesions)** from *symptomatic patients*. All other sources will continue to be sent to Quest Diagnostics<sup>1</sup>.

The four orders for this new testing are:

•[Herpes PCR CSF](#) •[Varicella PCR CSF](#) •[Herpes PCR Lesion/Swab](#) •[Varicella PCR Lesion/Swab](#)

Collection Requirements for this new testing should be consistent with current practices:

- » **Swab samples** from cutaneous and mucocutaneous lesions should be placed in Viral Transport Media. (Please avoid calcium alginate swabs as these contain substances that inhibit PCR testing.)
- » **CSF samples** should be collected and sent immediately to the laboratory.

***\*\*Please Note, these samples should be transported on ice, especially if testing will not be performed within one hour of collection. The strict temperature requirements for viral testing may impact the laboratory's ability to add on HSV and/or VZV testing.***

For any questions or concerns regarding HSV and VZV PCR testing, please contact the Microbiology Laboratory at WIH.

1. As is current practice, NICU "Surface Swabs" and "Blood Samples" for HSV PCR will continue to be performed at Rhode Island Hospital



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