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MEMORANDUM

TO: Hospital Laboratories, Hospital Administrators and Infection Control, Local Health Departments

FROM: Joshua J. Geltz, PhD
Chief, Division of Laboratories 

DATE: June 12, 2024

SUBJECT: *Mycobacterium tuberculosis* (mTB) submissions update and inclusion of susceptibility results with submitted isolates.

Specimen Submission Update

The IDPH Chicago Mycobacteriology Laboratory performs testing of specimens for tuberculosis (TB) surveillance and response. Recently, the protocol for transporting specimens to the laboratory for testing at the Illinois Department of Public Health’s (IDPH’s) Mycobacteriology Laboratory has changed. Effective immediately, all clinical specimens should reach the IDPH Chicago laboratory **within 5-Days of collection**.

Primary specimens received by noon, Monday through Thursday, will begin testing on the same day. Specimens received after noon, Monday through Friday, will begin testing on the next business day. Please remember to send the specimens as soon as possible and avoid “batching” specimen submissions.

Inclusion of Susceptibility Results

If susceptibility testing has already been performed prior to submitting to the IDPH Chicago laboratory, please include a copy of the isolate’s drug susceptibility report along with the IDPH submission form. This helps to ensure patients are on appropriate treatment and reduce turnaround time by eliminating redundant testing.

Reminder and Additional Information

As a reminder, “Laboratories shall send one isolate for each person to the State Public Health Laboratory within seven days after culture results are positive for MTB complex. If specimens are submitted to an out-of-state reference laboratory, the submitter shall ensure that the isolate is sent to the State Public Health Laboratory”. Please refer to the Tuberculosis Administrative Code (Section 696.170 part d) for more information.

We appreciate your cooperation with this effort to improve patient care by providing susceptibility results and timely submission of specimens for *Mycobacterium tuberculosis* testing.