

MEMORANDUM

To: Physicians
From: Nibha Saxena, M.D., Laboratory Medical Director
Subject: **Method and specimen change for Rapid Influenza and RSV**
Date: November 30, 2015

As of December 15, 2015, the OSF Saint Francis Medical Center System Laboratory will begin using a new method for Rapid Influenza and RSV testing. This change will provide higher sensitivity and specificity of 95% to 100% respectively, and require only a change in specimen collection.

Test orders will not change. For rapid influenza A & B antigen testing (i.e., in vitro immuno-chromatographic assay, not PCR), please continue to order LAB 1217, and for rapid RSV antigen testing please order LAB 1424. (NOTE: both may be performed on a single nasopharyngeal swab).

Specimen Requirements: A collection packet that contains a nylon flocced mini-tip swab with a 1mL of universal transport medium (UTM). The swab will be used to collect the nasopharyngeal (NP) sample and then will be broken off into the transport tube. This kit is available in Central supply for in-house use. The main lab will keep collection packets as needed for other clients.

Note: Do not use the collection packet that contains the 3 mL Transport. The collection packet for the PCRFLU (LAB 1881) contains a 3 mL vial of UTM. This UTM is not compatible with the Rapid Influenza antigen (LAB 1217), or rapid RSV antigens (LAB 1424) assays.

Samples, properly labeled with date, patient, and testing information, should be sent to the laboratory immediately for testing. NP specimens are viable for RSV testing at room temperature in UTM (but may be stored for 24 hrs at 2-8°C) for up to 24 hours. NP swabs are viable for influenza testing in UTM up to 72 hours (at room temperature or refrigerated at 2-8°C). These assays are not batched in the lab. Both tests are performed daily 24/7 around the clock.

Please contact John Farrell, Microbiology Director at (309) 624-9127 with any questions.