

**MEMORANDUM**

**TO:** Health Department Laboratories  
**FROM:** Richard Steece, PhD, D(ABMM)   
Laboratory Director  
**DATE:** October 22, 2020  
**SUBJECT:** *Bordetella pertussis/parapertussis* media collection and testing location change

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**NOTICE: CHANGE IN TESTING SITE AND SPECIMEN COLLECTION DEVICE**

Effective immediately, the Tennessee Department of Health will discontinue *Bordetella pertussis/parapertussis* culture/PCR testing. Going forward, specimens requiring Bordetella testing will be sent directly from the collection facility to American Esoteric Laboratories (AEL) in Memphis, TN. The change in testing location will also change the current required specimen medium (Regan-Lowe (RL) swabs) to a viral transport medium (VTM). Please make sure to place specimens in the AEL lockbox to ensure samples are sent to the appropriate location.

The following information describes the requirements for specimen collection, preparation, and handling that will ensure accurate test results:

- Nasopharyngeal swab collection (NPS – collector utilizes a synthetic swab (e.g. Dacron polyester, either aluminum or flexible plastic shaft) collect **one** nasopharyngeal swab and immediately placed in a viral transport medium.
- Minimum sample volume – 1 mL of sample required for testing.
- Maximum sample volume- 3 mL of sample.
- Transport and storage – Specimens in VTM should be processed and tested as soon as possible. If storage is required, specimens in VTM can be held at room temperature (18-30°C) for up to 4 hours, at refrigerator temperature (2-8°C) for up to 3 days, or at freezer (<-15°C) for up to 30 days. Testing must be performed by the stated times to ensure accurate test results. Therefore, specimens should be immediately sent out overnight on cold pack (or dry ice if already frozen) by courier or other mail service provider.
- Specimen collections in Regan-Lowe **will no longer be acceptable.**
- Corroborating information can also be found on the American Esoteric Laboratories Test Menu, found: <http://testmanual.sonichealthcareusa.com/pseudoaep/tcm/csp/TCM.csp#/test?id=114>

If you have any questions regarding this change, please contact the General Bacteriology supervisor, Julie Viruez via [Julie.viruez@tn.gov](mailto:Julie.viruez@tn.gov) and/or 615-837-5508.