




To the customers of the Division of Microbiology:

Happy New Year! The new 2018 Directory of Services is now available. We have several changes to share with you. The changes include but are not limited to the following topics:

- The Directory of Services is now only available electronically. Please view or print from our website at www.ndhealth.gov/microlab
- All testing submission forms are now available as a fillable PDF on our website.
- The new 'Standing Order' form can be used to order reflex testing.
- A \$15.00 handling fee will now be charged for Non-Tuberculosis Mycobacteria (NTM) isolates that are requested for susceptibility testing.
- Stability requirements are now listed for each assay.
- Pricing changes (more information below).
- New syphilis testing (more information below).
- Look for the new symbol included on new assays: 

Stability

One of the major changes to note is the inclusion of stability requirements for each assay. The goal is to improve sample quality and test results. In addition, the stability requirements provide guidance related to the acceptability of requesting additional testing as needed.

Please take special note for samples that are shipped to our facility via mail or courier system. Items processed through the mail may take longer to arrive at the laboratory than anticipated. Please make sure that the packing included is sufficient to keep samples at the desired temperature range until the samples are processed by our laboratory. Samples that are placed in the courier box should be delivered to the laboratory overnight and processed at approximately 8:00 AM the following morning. Failure to maintain the desired temperature may cause samples to lose their stability and compromise the quality of laboratory results. Samples that do not meet the stability requirements will be rejected. Again, this is to ensure that the results we report are of the highest quality.

Price Changes

In 2018, you will also note some changes in pricing. As the cost of reagents increases and additional funding decreases, we needed to reassess our fees. Some prices increased while a few decreased. Please review the current Directory of Services for the most updated information related to pricing. Pricing changes will take effect on February 1st, 2018. One of the major changes in pricing is in Chlamydia/Gonorrhea testing. Effective immediately, we will no longer be offering free testing for patients with a sexually transmitted disease (STD) contact. In addition, we will no longer be offering free testing or discounted testing for Hepatitis C, Hepatitis B, HIV, or virus isolation. All facilities will be charged according to the current Directory of Service.

Syphilis

We are now offering the reverse testing algorithm for syphilis screening and diagnosis. To order, please select "Syphilis Testing Panel" on the test request form. This panel will begin with a chemiluminescent microparticle immunoassay (CMIA) which is a treponemal assay. Positive results will reflex to confirmation with the Rapid Plasma Reagin (RPR) assay along with a titer. In the event discrepant results are obtained, a third confirmation test, *Treponema pallidum* particle agglutination (TP-PA), will be completed. Please see the new directory of services for more detail.

Standing Order Form

If you would like to have testing automatically reflex with our facility, please complete the attached 'Standing Order' form. For example, if your facility runs the reverse syphilis testing algorithm and we complete your confirmation testing using the RPR, you may want all negative RPR results to reflex to the TP-PA assay. If so, please complete the Standing Order form and return it to our facility. This will eliminate the need to call and add the TP-PA assay each time.

Please take a few moments to complete the 2018 Customer Satisfaction Survey at <https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/6RVZPWN>. We value your feedback!

If you should have any questions about a sample please contact our facility for the recommended guidance. **We are here to serve you!**

Best regards,



Christie Massen Ph.D., M.S., MLS(ASCP)
Director, Division of Microbiology