

TECHNICAL BULLETIN

Oregon State Public Health Laboratory
September 2012

Changes in HIV Testing

1. Replacement of the Western Blot by a New Testing Algorithm

As of **September 14, 2012**, the Oregon State Public Health Laboratory (OSPHL) will no longer offer the Western Blot confirmatory test for HIV-1. In accordance with Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and Clinical and Laboratory Standards Institute (CLSI), OSPHL will test all HIV screening specimens using a “4th generation” Combination (Combo) assay that tests simultaneously for HIV-1 antigen and HIV-1/HIV-2 antibody. Clients whose sample is negative on the Combo assay will be reported as negative for HIV antibodies, and no additional testing will be done. For samples that are positive on the Combo assay, a second test (Multispot) that differentiates between HIV-1 and HIV-2 will be performed. Patients who test positive on both the Combo and the differentiation test will be considered to be positive for HIV antibodies. Some patients who are positive by the Combo assay but negative by the differentiation test may have a recent HIV infection, others may not be infected but have a false positive antibody test. All patients with a positive Combo assay result and a negative differentiation test result need nucleic acid amplification testing (NAAT), also known as “viral load” testing, to determine whether they are infected or not. At this time OSPHL does not offer NAAT testing for HIV so clients with a positive Combo assay and a negative differentiation assay should be referred promptly to a clinician who can conduct and interpret timely NAAT testing. Please advise the local health department and the HIV prevention Program at Oregon Health Authority (971-673-0153), when you identify a client with a positive Combo Assay and a negative differentiation test. This change will not affect the way that you order HIV testing from OSPHL, except that the Western Blot will no longer be offered as a testing choice by OSPHL.

2. Discontinuation of Oral Fluid HIV Testing

As of **December 1, 2012**, the Oregon State Public Health Laboratory will not offer HIV testing of ORAL FLUID specimens. The demand for oral fluid testing has declined to the point where this testing is no longer cost-effective. Several rapid oral fluid HIV tests are available for providers who wish to continue to use this specimen type for screening. In order to allow our clients to use up any collection devices they currently have on hand, OSPHL will continue to conduct HIV testing of oral fluid specimens submitted through **November 30, 2012** but will not fill orders for oral fluid collection kits after **September 14, 2012**. Please contact Cessa Karson-Whitethorn in the OHA's HIV Prevention Program to discuss using a dual rapid test algorithm if your agency is unable to complete a blood draw for confirmatory testing. She can be reached at (971)673-0150 or cessa.karson@state.or.us. OSPHL will continue to offer HIV testing on BLOOD SPECIMENS for screening purposes as well as for confirmation of positive rapid HIV tests. There will be no effect on the way that you order these tests from OSPHL.