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Date: September 27, 2011
To: Clients of Hagerstown Medical Laboratory, Medical Staff, Laboratory, and Key Personnel
From: John G. Newby, M.D. Director of Laboratories 
Subject: New Influenza A/B and 2009 H1N1 Testing Assay effective 10/3/11

Hagerstown Medical Laboratory (HML) is pleased to announce the availability of a new test to identify Influenza A and Influenza B. It will also differentiate Influenza A (H1N1 2009) from other Influenza A strains. This new test is a Nucleic Acid Amplification qualitative assay, with multiplex real-time RT-PCR, for detecting Influenza A, Influenza B and H1N1 2009 Influenza viral RNA. *While this test replaces the current Influenza A/B Antigen by enzyme Immunoassay (EIA) test, the Collection Procedures and Collection Kit will remain the same.* We will begin testing by this method on October 3, 2011.

The test will be performed on all three shifts, 7 days a week. As before, the assay can be performed on the following specimens: Nasopharyngeal Swab, Nasal Aspirates and Nasopharyngeal Washes. Should the specimen test negative for the Influenza strains, it will be held in the laboratory for five days. HML will no longer offer Viral Respiratory culture in house. However, if a viral pathogen is suspected clinically, then a comprehensive respiratory virus screening culture can be ordered on the same specimen by calling HML Client Services. The specimen will then be forwarded to Quest Diagnostics for further analysis. This comprehensive culture with the subsequent identification of the specific viral pathogens will cost additionally from \$50.00 to \$300.00 depending on the presence or absence of the following pathogens:

- Adenovirus
- Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV)
- Parainfluenza Virus, types 1-3

Human Metapneumovirus is not included in this screening culture, but may be separately requested. This is a direct immunofluorescence assay and will require a new specimen. The cost for this test is approximately \$75.00.

For detailed instructions for specimen collection and the transport system, please refer to the Hagerstown Medical Laboratory on-line catalog. To obtain the specimen collection kit, please call (301) 665- 4900.

This change is part of the laboratory's continuing effort to utilize its available resources to provide the clinician with the most relevant and cost-effective testing methods available.

Please feel free to contact me at (301) 665- 4900 or Chanhpheng Phengvath, Microbiology Technical Specialist at (301) 665- 4936 with any microbiology questions or comments.