



MEMORANDUM #78

TO: UNC Hospitals Attending Physicians, Housestaff, Nursing Coordinators, Department Heads and Supervisors

FROM: Herbert C. Whinna, MD, PhD, Director, McLendon Clinical Laboratories  
Cathy Holleman, MT(ASCP)SC, MA Administrative Director, McLendon Clinical Laboratories  
Catherine Hammett-Stabler, PhD, Director, Core Laboratory  
Connie Bishop, MT(ASCP)SH, Assistant Administrative Director, Core Laboratory  
Melissa B. Miller, PhD, Director, Molecular Microbiology Laboratory  
Martha McGhee, MT(ASCP), Assistant Administrative Director Molecular Microbiology Laboratory

DATE: September 2, 2014

SUBJECT: **McLendon Clinical Laboratory Guidance for Samples Collected from Patients with Suspected Ebola and other Viral Hemorrhagic Fever Viruses**

McLendon Clinical Laboratories have worked with Hospital Epidemiology to develop the following guidelines should a patient be seen in the Emergency Department or admitted to UNC Hospitals with symptoms suspicious for Ebola or another viral hemorrhagic fever (VHF). This memo pertains to samples collected on UNC Hospitals inpatients and ED patients. Do not send samples from off-campus locations. Please refer to Dr. Weber's [memo](#)<sup>1</sup> of 14 August 2014 and UNC Healthcare's [Highly Communicable Diseases Preparedness and Response Plan](#)<sup>2</sup> referenced therein for protocols in handling patients presenting to off-campus locations.

After consultation with Hospital Epidemiology for any potential case of Ebola/VHF (pager 123-7427), please notify McLendon Clinical Laboratories as soon as diagnosis of Ebola/VHF is being considered and prior to the collection of any specimen so that staff can prepare to receive specimens. Specific questions related to Ebola/VHF testing and microbiology tests should be directed to the Microbiology Laboratory (919-966-4056). Questions related to chemistry, hematology, coagulation, and blood gases should be directed to the Core Laboratory (919-966-2361).

Since patients are to be placed immediately in strict isolation, all specimens are to be collected by the team assigned to care for the patient and in contact with the patient – phlebotomy will not collect samples. Do not perform Point of Care testing on suspected patients. All testing will be performed through McLendon Clinical Laboratories. The laboratories are securing additional equipment to establish a basic laboratory near the isolation room, but until these preparations are complete, testing will be performed in the Core and Microbiology Laboratories. Microbiology will facilitate any testing through the CDC. In-house testing will be limited to the list of tests below. Instructions regarding specimen decontamination, packaging, and transportation are attached. Additional copies can be found on the McLendon Clinical Laboratories web site OR obtained by calling Core or Microbiology.

Note: Pursuant to CDC guidance that testing for transfusion of blood products (type and screen, cross matching, etc) cannot be done safely, these tests will NOT be performed. Patients will be given universally compatible products (eg O-neg pRBCs and AB plasma).

1. **ALL specimens**, regardless of sample type (blood, urine, CSF, etc.) OR testing ordered (chemistry, hematology, coagulation, urinalysis, or microbiology) are to be collected by the clinical team assigned to care for the patient.
2. Phlebotomy will not collect specimens.
3. Obtain transportation containers from Microbiology.
4. Follow the instructions describing decontamination, packaging, and transportation.
5. Label all specimens appropriately.
6. Order all tests in Epic.
7. Prepare a separate container for each laboratory receiving samples (e.g., one for Core, one for Microbiology – you can place multiple samples in one container). **DO NOT USE THE PNEUMATIC TUBE SYSTEM.** Specimens

**must** be hand-delivered to the specific laboratory in which testing will be performed; i.e. either Microbiology or Core.

8. Turn-around-times will be impacted because of the precautions that must be followed by staff.

Available tests are:

Microbiology Testing	Core Laboratory Testing		
Malaria smear	Glucose	Creatinine	Blood gases
Gastrointestinal pathogen panel	Sodium	Bilirubin	CBC
Comprehensive ova and parasite	Bicarbonate	AST	PT/INR
Blood cultures		CK	Urinalysis (by dipstick)
		Calcium	

Any additional testing will require director approval.

<sup>1</sup> [http://news.unchealthcare.org/empnews/2014/aug-14/important-message-regarding-ebola-2013-from-david-j-weber-md-mph-associate-chief-medical-officer-unc-hospitals?utm\\_source=int&utm\\_medium=home&utm\\_campaign=inthome](http://news.unchealthcare.org/empnews/2014/aug-14/important-message-regarding-ebola-2013-from-david-j-weber-md-mph-associate-chief-medical-officer-unc-hospitals?utm_source=int&utm_medium=home&utm_campaign=inthome)

<sup>2</sup> <http://intranet.unchealthcare.org/intranet/hospitaldepartments/infection/policies/hcrespdisease.pdf>