



**MEMORANDUM #149**

**TO:** UNCHCS Attending Physicians and Faculty Practice Physicians, Housestaff, Clinical Nurse Coordinators, Department Heads and Supervisors

**FROM:** *SUC* Steven Cotten, PhD, Co-Director, Clinical Chemistry Laboratory

*MW* Herbert Whinna, MD, PhD, Medical Director, McLendon Clinical Laboratories

**SUBJECT:** **Changes in Ethanol Testing at UNC Hospitals**

**DATE:** June 7, 2019

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Effective June 18<sup>th</sup> 2019, the laboratory will be updating alcohol testing to standardize with other hospitals within the UNC HealthCare System. The default order for ethanol analysis in serum will be performed enzymatically instead of gas chromatography. This will improve efficiency and decrease turnaround time for results. Ethanol analysis via gas chromatography will still be available under the name Ethanol, GC UNC. Analysis of volatile compounds, toxic alcohols, and ethylene glycol will be unchanged.

Test Name	Methodology	EPIC Test Number
Ethanol	Enzymatic*	LAB46
Ethanol, GC UNC	Gas Chromatography	LAB5418
Alcohol Panel: Ethanol Methanol Isopropanol Acetone Ethylene Glycol	Gas Chromatography	LAB5132

\*Extremely high levels of lactic acid and lactate dehydrogenase found in postmortem or antemortem specimens may produce falsely elevated results in enzymatic assays. If high levels of lactic acid or LDH are suspected, analysis by gas chromatography is recommended.

If you have question please contact Dr. Steve Cotten (984-974-1489) [Steven.Cotten@unchealth.unc.edu](mailto:Steven.Cotten@unchealth.unc.edu)