



**MEMORANDUM #189**

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

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**SUBJECT: Update to Rapid Testing for Positive Blood Cultures for *Staphylococcus epidermidis***

DATE: February 6, 2020

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Effective February 10, 2020, the Clinical Microbiology Laboratory will begin reporting the presence of the *mecA* gene associated with *Staphylococcus epidermidis* using a molecular assay that rapidly identifies *Streptococcus*, *Enterococcus*, and *Staphylococcus* (Nanosphere Verigene Gram Positive Blood Culture Test, BC-GP). The *mecA* gene encodes for methicillin/oxacillin resistance.

The BC-GP assay is FDA-cleared and is already in use to identify *Streptococcus* spp. (such as viridans group *Streptococcus*, *S. pyogenes* (group A Strep), *S. agalactiae* (group B Strep), *S. anginosus* group), *Enterococcus faecalis*, *E. faecium*, and *Staphylococcus* spp. (such as *S. aureus*, *S. lugdunensis*, and *S. epidermidis*). The BC-GP can also detect vancomycin resistance in *Enterococcus* and methicillin resistance associated with the presence of *mecA* in *S. aureus*.

The assay is performed automatically on positive blood cultures with a Gram stain of Gram positive cocci. Results will be available in ~3 hours after the Gram stain result. Culture confirmation and susceptibility testing will still be performed per routine laboratory protocol. Our in-house data demonstrate >97% agreement of the BC-GP test with culture for *mecA* detection in *S. epidermidis*.

Questions can be directed to the Microbiology Lab (984-974-1805) or Dr. Melissa Miller at [Melissa.Miller@unchealth.unc.edu](mailto:Melissa.Miller@unchealth.unc.edu).