

TO: Medical Staff

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RE: COVID-19 PCR: Appropriate Use of the Rapid Test

DATE: 18 May 2020

BACKGROUND

UNC Medical Center has two types of COVID-19 diagnostic tests available: 1) A batched test (<24 hours turnaround time) with a current capacity of ~1,000/day, and 2) a rapid test (<1 hour turnaround time) with a current capacity of <50 per/day. There is only a single order for COVID-19 PCR diagnostic testing and the algorithm for which test is used is predetermined and implemented at the lab level:

- **Rapid testing should ONLY be performed for the indications below.** It will NOT be performed for any other reason (e.g., time sensitive surgery).
- Answering the questions correctly in the Epic order for a COVID-19 test determines whether the patient will be tested using the rapid or batched test. In general, symptomatic patients receive the rapid test; symptomatic inpatients receiving duplicate testing and symptomatic ED-to-discharge patients get the batched test. In general, all other patients receive the batched test. For asymptomatic patients being admitted for transplant or being admitted from a prison or congregate setting experiencing an outbreak, choose "No- Other" and enter the reason for testing. **DO NOT CHECK "SYMPTOMATIC" IF THE PATIENT DOES NOT HAVE SIGNS/SYMPTOMS OF COVID-19.**
- Do **NOT** call the Microbiology Laboratory for results or to request when a result will be available. Positive results will be called to the provider. All test results are available in Epic.
- **Time-sensitive procedures should be not be delayed while waiting the results of a COVID-19 test.**

PERMITTED INDICATIONS FOR ORDERING A RAPID TEST

- Inpatients with signs/symptoms of COVID-19, initial test
- ED patient being admitted with signs/symptoms of COVID-19, unable to provide a history, or discharge to a congregate setting
- Unscheduled patients being admitted to Labor & Delivery
- Patients being admitted from prison for time-sensitive surgery (limit, 2 patients per day)
- Patients being admitted for a solid-organ transplant
- Patients being admitted from a congregate setting (e.g., nursing home, prison, jails) experiencing an outbreak (<https://files.nc.gov/ncdhs/documents/files/covid-19/Weekly-COVID19-Ongoing-Outbreaks.pdf>)