Memorandum - Micro #248

To: UNC Medical Center Attending Physicians, Faculty
Practice Physicians, Housestaff, Clinical Nurse Coordinators, Department Heads and Supervisors

From: Kevin Alby, PhD, Associate Director, Clinical Microbiology Laboratory

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Date: June 19, 2025

Subject: Update to PCR test for Methicillin Resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* (MRSA) screening

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Beginning June 16th, 2025, the UNC Medical Center Clinical Microbiology Laboratory will accept nares swabs for MRSA screening by PCR (MRSA Screen EPIC: LAB234) for **all patients regardless of age.** Previously, patients under 2 years old were only screened by culture.

Key points:

- Specimen collection: No changes. Continue using nares swabs collected with an (Eswab Infor #s 054897 and 143675 both acceptable).
- Other specimen types: Screening of specimen types other than nares will continue to be performed by culture.
- Purpose: The MRSA PCR test is intended to determine a patient's colonization status. It is NOT to be used for routine epidemiologic surveillance, which remains selective culture.

Questions can be directed to the Microbiology Lab 984-974-1805 or Dr. Kevin Alby at kevin.alby@unchealth.unc.edu.