

HIV & HCV MOLECULAR TESTING UPDATE

Date: November 6, 2008

Subject: HIV Type-1 RNA Quantification (Viral Load), and
Hepatitis C Virus (HCV) Quantification Testing

Effective Immediately, EMH Reference Laboratory will discontinue in-house testing for both **HIV-1 Viral Load by branch-chain DNA (bDNA) analysis** and **Hepatitis C Virus Quantitation by branch-chain DNA (bDNA) analysis**. These tests will be sent out for analysis. Specimen requirements have not changed (see table below).

In addition, the **Hepatitis C Virus Qualitative PCR** test has been discontinued. This test is no longer necessary due to the increased sensitivity of the ‘HCV Quantification by PCR’ assay by Mayo Clinical Laboratories.

We are also offering HIV-1 and HCV Quantification by PCR, to be performed at Mayo Clinical Laboratories. When ordering quantitative HIV or HCV testing on a patient for the first time, please request ‘**Quantitative HIV (or HCV) PCR**’. All subsequent viral loads on these patients should be ordered using ‘Quantitative HIV (or HCV) PCR.’

It is recommended that physicians who are following individual patient responses to treatment should continue their monitoring using the same method, since viral assays using different methodologies may produce significantly different results. Therefore, when ordering testing for patients already being monitored by branch-chain DNA analysis, you must specifically request ‘**Quantitative HIV (or HCV) bDNA**’.

Specimen Requirements

Test name	Order code	Specimen Vol/Type	Storage/Transport
HCV Quant bDNA	HCVBN	SST, 1 ml serum (serum from plain red tubes not acceptable)	Freeze serum in plastic vial within 4 hours of collection.
HCV Quant PCR	HCVPR	SST, 1.5 ml serum (serum from plain red tubes not acceptable)	Freeze serum in plastic vial within 4 hours of collection.
HIV Quant bDNA	HIVBN	ACD-A, 3 ml plasma	Freeze plasma in plastic vial within 4 hours of collection.
HIV Quant PCR	HIVPR	2 LAV, 3 ml plasma	Freeze plasma in plastic vial within 4 hours of collection.

For more information, questions or comments regarding this notice, please contact Ellen Michael, Senior Sales Representative at 847-612-7058 or EMICHA@emhc.org.