



August 2008

***Chlamydomphila pneumoniae* and *Mycoplasma pneumoniae* – New Respiratory Laboratory Testing Update**

To Health Care Providers

New Respiratory Testing by PCR:

As of August 1, 2008, the Ontario Public Health Laboratories (OPHL) will introduce a new nucleic acid based amplification real-time PCR test to detect both *Chlamydomphila (Chlamydia) pneumoniae* and *Mycoplasma pneumoniae* in a single specimen. This will shorten turn around time and provide higher sensitivity and specificity when compared to culture. No change is required for specimen collection and transport.

Note that results for both *M. pneumoniae* and *C. pneumoniae* will be reported on requests for detection of either pathogen. *M. pneumoniae* culture will continue to be performed in addition to PCR on all requests for *Mycoplasma* detection.

Discontinuation of Serology Testing for Mycoplasma:

As of September 1, 2008 the OPHL will discontinue serologic testing for Mycoplasma. This decision is based on review of the current assays available, and the published literature.

Mycoplasma serology test limitations include the late elevation of IgG antibodies which may not be detectable until 4 to 5 weeks after onset of illness; the persistence of IgM antibodies for several years in many patients; and the lack of an IgM response in many adults. Also, other Mycoplasma serovars are known to cross-react with *M. pneumoniae* making the interpretation of test results very difficult. Finally, the performance characteristics of the assays currently in use at the OPHL have not been validated in very young or elderly patients. These factors place a serious limitation on the utility of serology testing for the diagnosis of acute *M. pneumoniae* infections.

For Further Information:

- PCR testing contact Respiratory Laboratory at 416-235-5710
- Serology testing contact Dr. Tony Mazzulli at 416-586-4695