



Pennsylvania Department of Health Bureau of Laboratories Updates

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100 Years of Public Health- 1906 -2006

The Bureau of Laboratories Team



The Bureau of Laboratories has a great asset – Helga Rost. Helga is the Bureau's receptionist. She is the friendly voice on the other end of the line or the smiling face at the front desk when you visit us. Helga handles many duties but her customer service skills are outstanding. She answers the phone and directs calls for the entire facility. This can be difficult keeping track of 70-some employees but, with our paging system, voice mail and the notes on her calendar, she does her absolute best to make sure we receive our calls. When you call the Bureau, you first receive a recorded message giving you extensions of the different laboratories or the option of dialing the employee's extension. If you don't know the employee's extension or who you should talk with, your call will go to Helga and she will direct and connect you.

Every morning, employees are welcomed with Helga's warm greetings. She always has a very upbeat and positive attitude. She goes beyond her duties and responsibilities by bringing in a special treat for employees' birthdays or other special occasions. She is a real joy to work with!

During break periods and free time after work, Helga likes to keep fit by walking. You can find beautiful pictures of her grandchildren on her desk that she enthusiastically will tell you all about. In her spare time on weekends, Helga likes to find "treasures" at garage sales. If you're looking for

something, let Helga know and she will keep her eye out for it!

Helga has worked at the Bureau of Laboratories since October 2005. She has made our work days much more pleasant since she joined our staff.

Division of Clinical Microbiology

STD Testing Update

To All Microbiology Laboratories:

Recently, reports have appeared in the literature of "Stealth GC". These are strains of *Neisseria gonorrhoeae* that do not produce the enzyme prolyliminopeptidase. Many of the kits for rapid identification *Neisseria gonorrhoeae* use this test for its identification. The absence of this enzyme causes false negative results for patients infected with these strains. These prolyliminopeptidase negative strains retain the biochemical pattern typical of *Neisseria gonorrhoeae* and can be identified with CTA sugars and other biochemicals. DNA probes, PCR and other molecular-based test will also correctly identify these prolyliminopeptidase negative strains. To date these strains have been reported in Australia, New Zealand, Great Britain, Scotland and Denmark. No strains have been reported in the U.S yet. Laboratories that are testing for *Neisseria gonorrhoeae* need to be aware of the patient's recent travel history and modify their testing protocol accordingly.

SOURCE: M Unemo, H M Palmer, T Blackmore, G Herrera, H Fredlund, A Limnios, N Nguyen, and J Tapsall

Global transmission of rolyliminopeptidase-negative Neisseria gonorrhoeae strains: implications for changes in diagnostic strategies

Sexually Transmitted Infections 2007; 83: 47-51

Norovirus Submissions

To All Microbiology Laboratories:

There has been some confusion regarding the Norovirus testing by the Bureau of Laboratories (BOL), in Lionville PA. The Bureau does not provide Norovirus testing as a primary diagnostic tool. Rather, the primary purpose of our testing is to provide support to our Bureau of Epidemiology in outbreak investigation. As such Norovirus testing is not performed on a “stat” basis. Instead, it is performed in batches, with results generated at least weekly, depending on volume.

The goal of Norovirus testing at the BOL is to have results for the Bureau of Epidemiology within a week of the receipt of specimens at the Bureau of Laboratories. We will provide the results of this testing to hospitals, physicians and other health care providers who have an interest. However, such providers should not expect to be able to use this testing as the sole diagnostic tool for patient management.

The BOL will try to accommodate requests to expedite testing when it is possible and/or necessary. Please contact George Fraser at 610-280-3464 or email gfraser@state.pa.us if you have questions regarding this matter.

Sincerely,

Stanley M. Reynolds, Director
Division of Clinical Microbiology

PROFICIENCY TESTING SCHEDULE

| PA Limited Survey | Blood Lead & EP | Blood Alcohol | Drugs of Abuse in Blood | Drugs of Abuse in Urine |
|------------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Nov. 6 th 2006 | Oct. 4 th 2006 | Nov. 1 st 2006 | Nov. 8 th 2006 | Oct. 4 th 2006 |
| Mar. 5 th 2007 | Feb. 7 th 2007 | Mar. 5 th 2007 | Mar. 14 th 2007 | Feb. 7 th 2007 |
| Jul. 9 th 2007 | Jun. 6 th 2007 | Jul. 2 nd 2007 | Jul. 11 th 2007 | Jun. 6 th 2007 |
| Nov. 5 th 2007 | Oct. 3 rd 2007 | Nov. 5 th 2007 | Nov. 7 th 2007 | Oct. 3 rd 2007 |

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Visit Our Website At:

www.health.state.pa.us/labs

This and all future updates will be available on-line at the above website. If you wish to have future updates e-mailed to your facility, please respond to the following e-mail address with your request to Vincent Lan at: vlan@state.pa.us.

The most recent copy of future updates will accompany all mailings that the Bureau distributes.

DEPARTMENT OF
HEALTH