Laboratory Guidelines

Specimen Processing and Testing for Suspected or Confirmed Ebola Patients

These guidelines pertain to all St. Luke’s facilities (clinics, hospitals, emergency departments)

As information and guidance from the state and the CDC is developing daily, these guidelines are subject to change. Refer to the website for current information.

Specimen testing of patients with suspected or confirmed Ebola should not occur within the rapid response or reference lab environment due to limited ability to decontaminate and potential for staff exposure. Bedside (triage) laboratories should be established and dedicated to specimen testing for patients with suspected or confirmed Ebola.

Lab Notification and Bedside Laboratory Coordination:

- When a patient with suspected or confirmed Ebola presents to a clinic or emergency department, the Administrator Supervisor is to contact their onsite Laboratory Supervisor.
- If the transfer center coordinates an admission for a suspected or confirmed Ebola patient, the Administrative Supervisor at the receiving facility will notify the onsite Laboratory Supervisor.
- Once notified, the lab will identify nursing unit resource capacity to deliver a “Bedside Laboratory Kit” which will include the following:
  - i-STAT (Basic Chemistry Panel, Hemoglobin, Hematocrit, Troponin, Arterial Blood Gases)
  - Multi-Stix 10SG Urine Dipstick (Urinalysis)
  - Venipuncture supplies
  - Primary packaging containers for send outs
  - Test Requisition Forms
  - CDC Guidelines for the collection of any testing transported from patient room to a Category A shipping container
  - Note: Additional bedside testing materials will be provided based on patient need.
  - Note: St. Luke’s McCall and St. Luke’s Elmore only have one i-STAT on site. In the event of the need to utilize the equipment within a bedside laboratory, system partners will coordinate the distribution of a back-up i-STAT for these locations.
- If the patient is transported to another facility for care, the Bedside Laboratory Kit should accompany the patient.

Specimen Collection:

- Every effort should be made for testing for EBOLA to be collected once the patient has arrived at the Boise facility. See specific instructions below.
- Patient specimens for bedside testing should be collected by assigned nursing team at the bedside.
All tubes will be labeled at the bedside with two patient identifiers (name and date of birth) and date/time of collection and initials of the person collecting the specimen.

After testing has been performed, specimens are to be discarded within a hard plastic biohazard sharps container within the patient room. Under no circumstances should specimens from suspected or confirmed Ebola patients be sent to the rapid response or reference lab for storage/disposal.

Only specimens required for testing are to be collected.

**Specimen Testing:**

- Specimen testing will be performed by assigned nursing team within the bedside Lab.
- Any testing outside of the capabilities of the bedside lab will be discussed with the ordering provider, state epidemiologist, and on-site laboratory leadership.
- The CDC will be contacted to coordinate the appropriate testing location for orders outside of the test menu offered through the Bedside Laboratory.
- Specimen testing will not performed within any St. Luke’s rapid response or reference lab environment.

**Specimen Packaging:**

- Specimens requiring shipment to the (IBL) Idaho Bureau of Laboratories and tested for EBOLA should follow CDC guidelines and with the assistance of IBL:
  - Every effort should be made for testing for EBOLA to be collected once the patient has arrived at the Boise facility.
  - Staff member that collects the specimen (2 full 3ml EDTA Lavender top vacutainer tubes) will triple bag the specimen and place within a primary plastic receptacle.
  - The specimen, along with provided absorbent material, will be placed within the primary plastic receptacle and enter decontamination area with the staff member.
  - The staff member and primary plastic receptacle will be decontaminated according to policy guidelines.
  - The decontaminated specimen will be handed off to designated individual for Category A transport packaging. This will occur within the department where the specimen was collected (i.e. - Emergency Department, Intensive Care Unit, etc.). The specimen will not be transported to the lab.
  - **If the specimen cannot be collected at the Boise Campus** Laboratory staff at the Site will follow contact isolation procedures for packaging of the specimen.
  - Laboratory staff will coordinate with their local mailroom to ensure the package has appropriate Category A Shippers Declaration labeling. If the campus does not have a mailroom to support the strict requirements for labeling they can contact the Boise Mail Room at (208-381-2097) to request guidance and help.
Laboratory staff will coordinate the FedEx pick up of the packaged and labeled specimen.

- Each rapid response laboratory will train 4-6 individuals on Category A transport.
- Confirmation testing for Ebola if drawn at the Boise Campus may take 4-6 hours once the Idaho State Lab receives the sample.

**Equipment Decontamination Procedure:**

- Equipment used for testing patients with suspected Ebola will be quarantined with the patient until confirmatory testing is received.
  - If patient is determined NOT to have Ebola, the equipment may be put back in service following routine infection prevention procedures.
  - If the patient IS determined to have Ebola, the equipment will be destroyed after patient discharge based on direction from the CDC and/or State Epidemiologist.