

Date: February 29, 2012

To: South Zone, Central Zone and North Zone (excluding former Northern Lights Region)
Physicians, Nurses and Laboratory Directors and Managers

From: AHS Laboratory Services

Re: B-type natriuretic peptide (BNP) or N-terminal proBNP (NT-proBNP) On-Site Availability and Test Utilization Criteria

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Key Messages:

- On-site test availability of BNP or NT-proBNP will be significantly extended throughout the province, i.e., to most locations with an active ER, as of March 6, 2012.
- Test utilization criteria throughout Alberta will be as follows:

Ordering Location	Physician Type	Reason
Community (Heart Function Clinic)	Cardiologist or Internist	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Known Heart Failure (HF) patient assessment and management – following/assessing efficacy of therapy. Otherwise not available since BNP/NT-proBNP are not effective screening tests in non-acute settings.
Emergency Department	ED physician - includes specialists and family physicians	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Differential diagnosis of HF from other causes of dyspnea only when the diagnosis is uncertain, i.e., an intermediate pre-test probability.
In-patients	Attending physician, consulting Cardiologist or Internist	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Differential diagnosis of HF from other causes of dyspnea only when the diagnosis is uncertain in patients previously admitted for some other reason. Differentiate worsening HF from other causes of SOB in a patient with known cardiac dysfunction and other co-morbidities. Pre-discharge testing for risk stratification to determine adequacy of therapy prior to discharge and to determine a management plan post-discharge.

A patient should not normally have more than 2 tests ordered in any 21 day period. Rare exceptions to these test utilization criteria will require approval of the pathologist or biochemist on-call.

- Educational materials and a complete listing of the Hospital Laboratory sites implementing BNP/NT-proBNP testing may be found at: <http://www.albertahealthservices.ca/6388.asp>.

For additional questions contact:

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This bulletin has been reviewed and approved by Dr. James Wesenberg, AHS Medical / Scientific Director, Laboratory Services - Regional Centres and Rural