

Discontinuation of Respiratory Pathogen Panel Testing for Outpatients

Effective Date: 8/29/2024

Due to an unexpected and extreme reagent shortage for the Respiratory Pathogen Panel (EPIC: LAB1231265), Corewell Health – East Laboratory will no longer be offering this test for outpatient ordering. The lab will reserve the remaining limited reagents for critically ill inpatients.

For patients presenting in the outpatient setting with symptoms consistent with upper respiratory tract infections, the prominent etiologies for which testing may inform patient management are influenza A/B, respiratory syncytial virus (RSV), and COVID-19. Alternative tests for these indications will continue to be offered (see below). Other viral upper respiratory infections can generally be diagnosed clinically, and no change in management is recommended based on the specific virus causing the infection (i.e., seasonal coronavirus (not SARS-CoV-2), parainfluenza 1-4, rhinovirus, etc.) in most outpatients.

The recommended alternative tests are SARS-CoV-2 (COVID-19) PCR [LAB1230607] and Influenza A/B, RSV PCR [LAB1231142]. These tests can be ordered together if indicated and continue to be available for outpatients.

Depending on the patient's insurance, the Respiratory Pathogen Panel may also result in a large financial responsibility for the patient. Medicare guidelines, which often inform private insurance policies, only cover large multiplex panels in patients that are immune suppressed, critically ill, or under the care of an infectious disease, pulmonology, oncology, or transplant specialist (<https://www.cms.gov/medicare-coverage-database/view/lcd.aspx?lcdid=39001>). In contrast, the smaller assays for influenza A/B, RSV, and COVID-19 are less expensive and more likely to be covered in the outpatient setting (dependent on patient insurer).

For questions regarding testing, please contact Corewell Health Laboratory Customer Service at 800-551-0488

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