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DATE: March 6, 2017
TO: UCH Medical Staff, Housestaff, Patient Care Centers, and Outpatient Clinics
FROM: Kathleen G. Beavis, MD, Director, Clinical Microbiology / Immunology Laboratories
RE: Testing for Meningitis/Encephalitis

Available Date and Pathogens Detected:

Effective March 8, 2017, the Clinical Microbiology Laboratory will begin performing the FilmArray Meningitis/Encephalitis (ME) Panel. This panel detects multiple viral, bacterial, and fungal pathogens by PCR from a single CSF specimen with a rapid turnaround time. This test will provide increased sensitivity over testing previously available, and will include targets not detected by current methods.

The targets detected by the ME Panel include:

- Bacterial:** *E. coli K1 serotype, S. agalactiae, L. monocytogenes, N. meningitidis, S. pneumoniae, H. influenzae*
- Viral:** CMV, enterovirus, HHV-6, HSV-1, HSV-2, human parechovirus, VZV
- Yeast:** *Cryptococcus neoformans/gattii*

Test ordering information:

The ME Panel is ordered in Epic using the Order code MEPNL "Meningitis/Encephalitis Panel". Bacterial culture and Gram stain must always be ordered concurrently, using order code SFC "Spinal Fluid Culture".

This test is not appropriate for the diagnosis of infections associated with CNS hardware/shunt infections. For these cases, please order SFC "Spinal Fluid Culture" and other tests as appropriate. This panel does not test for TB or other mycobacteria, or for fungi other than *Cryptococcus*, so separate tests for AFB and/or fungal culture must be ordered if required. Also, testing for cell count, protein, and glucose must still be ordered separately.

Specimen requirements:

The only acceptable specimen is CSF. Collect a minimum of 1 mL of CSF in a sterile container and transport to the Clinical Microbiology Laboratory, tube station 906. This will be sufficient to perform both the ME Panel and Spinal Fluid Culture. Additional fluid will be needed if other tests are ordered.

Testing Schedule and turnaround time:

Testing will be performed 7 days/week. Results will be available within 3 hours of receipt in the microbiology laboratory.

Discontinued assays:

Individual PCR assays for CMV, HSV, VZV, and enterovirus will no longer be offered for CSF.

Questions:

For technical questions, please contact Scott Matushek, Chief Medical Technologist, at 773-795-0055, or Angella Charnot-Katsikas MD, Assistant Director, at 773-834-2473.

Any billing questions should be directed to Finance 773-702-6664.