Laboratory Testing for Infectious Causes of Diarrhea

Community-acquired diarrhea ≥ 7 days duration
OR
Travel-related diarrhea
OR
Diarrhea with risk factors for severe disease

Health care-associated diarrhea (onset after 3rd inpatient day) or recent antibiotic use

Testing not generally indicated

Clostridium difficile by PCR
87493.01

Use clinical judgment to guide need for additional testing

Gastrointestinal PCR Panel
87045.08

Clos Difficile Toxin Screen
LAB 1416

No additional testing required

If diarrhea persists:

Consider Send-Outs:
- Cyclospora Stain LAB960
- Cryptosporidium Ag, Feces LAB2041
- Giardia Ag, Feces LAB2042
- Enteric Pathogens Culture LAB1080

Notes:
1. Risk factors for severe disease include age, immunocompromised state, bloody diarrhea, dehydration, fever, current or need for hospitalization, and severe abdominal pain.
2. Detection via molecular methods does not differentiate between viable and non-viable/treated organism; therefore, positive results can persist > 30 days after treatment.
4. Send-outs to a reference lab may require ≥ 72 hours before results are available.
5. Positive Toxin Screen indicates active disease. Negative Toxin Screen indicates likely colonization and antibiotic treatment is usually not indicated.