

AUGUST 2023

## Updated Syphilis Testing

Saint Luke's Regional Laboratories will change the syphilis screen and confirmatory testing from a traditional algorithm to a reverse treponemal algorithm.

Traditionally, syphilis testing has been performed with a nontreponemal screening test, typically a rapid plasma reagin (RPR), or venereal disease research laboratory (VDRL), that attempts to measure antigen-antibody interaction from reactivity to cardiolipin. Confirmation of a positive RPR/VDRL was previously performed by send-out testing to a reference lab for a treponemal assay.

With the implementation of the new Siemens automated chemistry line, the laboratory now has the ability to offer an FDA approved treponemal assay in lieu of the traditional RPR. The treponemal assay has been shown in some studies to offer increased sensitivity in early and latent syphilis, as well as requiring less laboratory resources to perform. Confirmatory testing and semi-quantitative titers will be performed by the traditional RPR assay.

The laboratory order for syphilis testing will be:

### **SYPHILIS ANTIBODY (LAB6402)**

Order Sets that include RPR testing have been updated to Syphilis Antibody.

## Updated Celiac Testing and Reporting Algorithm

The current Celiac disease test offered by Saint Luke's Regional Laboratories consists of a four element assay for IgA/IgG gliadin (DGP) and IgA/IgG tissue transglutaminase (TTG), performed simultaneously. The manufacturer of this assay has discontinued production, and the laboratory is using this opportunity to implement suggested screening guidelines from the American Gastroenterological Association (AGA).

The new Celiac laboratory workflow begins with serum IgA quantification. Patients with normal or elevated IgA levels are then reflexed to IgA TTG testing, and IgA DGP testing in equivocal cases. Patients with low or absent IgA levels are reflexed to send out testing for IgG TTG/DGP testing. The individual reagents in the new assay are improved clones purportedly offering improved sensitivity/specificity over the current assay.

The laboratory order for the Celiac screen will be:

### **CELIAC SCREEN (LAB2050)**

Send out testing for HLA DQ typing to help resolve discrepant laboratory/clinical/biopsy cases will continue to be offered.

Client Services: 816-932-3850 ♦ [saintlukeskc.org](http://saintlukeskc.org)

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## **Annual Notice to Physicians for Laboratory Testing**

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Saint Luke's Regional Laboratories (SLRL) works to ensure compliance with all guidelines governing the submission of Medicare claims for laboratory services including, but not limited to, medical necessity and Advance Beneficiary Notice (ABN) use.

Medicare will only pay for tests that meet the Medicare definition of medical necessity. The Office of the Inspector General (OIG) wants to ensure that physicians order only medically necessary tests & that physicians know that the OIG may impose civil penalties on those who order otherwise. The OIG does recognize that a physician must be able to order any tests, including screening tests they believe appropriate for the treatment of their patients.

Medicare may deny payment for a test that the physician believes appropriate, but which does not meet the Medicare definition of medical necessity. In this case, the orders should be accompanied by a properly executed ABN.

SLRL offers only Medicare defined Organ and Disease related panels. The individual components of these panels & the corresponding CPT/HCPCS codes and additional detailed information can be found in the on-line [Lab Test Directory](#). Customized panels should not be used. The Medicare Limitation Amount for each CPT/HCPCS code can be found in the Medicare National Limitation Amount reference supplied to physician's offices by Medicare.

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