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HETL

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June 12th, 2012

Dear HETL Client:

Effective July 2nd 2012 HETL will discontinue the Western Blot HIV-1 test for confirmation of HIV in conjunction with serum samples. Instead, HETL will employ a new testing algorithm utilizing an FDA approved 4th generation antibody/antigen combination test in conjunction with the Bio-Rad[®] Multispot assay. The MultiSpot is an FDA approved HIV-1 and HIV-2 discriminatory test. Replacing the Western Blot with the Bio-Rad[®] Multispot is consistent with the latest recommended guidance from CDC. For HETL clients, adoption of the new testing algorithm means:

- earlier detection of HIV infection
- substantially reduced turnaround times for reporting of positive HIV results
- valuable laboratory results on the HIV type (1 or 2) in positive cases
- cost savings for clients- \$30 for MultiSpot vs. \$100 for the Western Blot.

Effective Monday July 2nd, 2012 serum specimens that are positive for HIV-1/HIV-2 using the 4th generation antigen/antibody HIV test will be reflexed to the Multispot test. Western Blot testing will remain available as a reflex for oral fluid HIV testing until 12/31/2012.

More specific information for clients can be found at our web site (www.mainepublichealth.gov/lab). Find the link on our home page entitled: "Microbiology Testing: How to Submit Samples" and download the document entitled "HIV-Serum".

Please feel free to contact HETL serology with specific questions about the new HIV testing algorithm at 207-287-1722.

Sincerely,

Kenneth G. Pote, Ph.D.
Chief of Laboratory Operations
Me-CDC Health and Environmental Testing Laboratory