Alberta Health Services

PROVLAB ALBERTA

Laboratory Bulletin

Date: **January 24, 2012**

To: **Alberta Health and Wellness, Medical Officers of Health, Physicians, Nurses, and Registered Midwives, Alberta MicroNet, AHS Communicable Disease Control Nurses, Infection Prevention and Control, Laboratory Directors and Managers**

From: **Provincial Laboratory for Public Health (ProvLab)**

Re: **Discontinuation of SECOND TRIMESTER syphilis screening on pregnant women**

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Background:

High rates of infectious syphilis in pregnant women resulting in congenital syphilis cases, was the rationale for introducing an enhanced prenatal syphilis testing program at the second trimester (24-28 weeks) and at delivery, in addition to routine testing in the first trimester or first prenatal encounter. A program evaluation of this enhanced testing protocol by Alberta Health and Wellness of the infectious syphilis cases in pregnant women together with congenital cases has shown that screening in the second trimester had limited value in identifying cases.

Key Message:

Although syphilis screening in the second trimester (24-28 weeks) is now discontinued, testing on pregnant women **must be** performed at:

- First trimester **OR** at any time if this is a first time prenatal encounter for syphilis, HIV, hepatitis B, rubella and varicella-zoster immunity, and the ABO/Rh and RBC antibody screen.
    - Use form HS0001-133 (Prenatal Testing – Initial Screening for Pregnant Women)
    - Forms may be ordered online at https://secure5.datagroup.ca/acsc/request_ext.asp
    - collect one gel separator tube AND one EDTA tube

AND

- At Delivery for syphilis rescreening.
    - use new form HS0286 (Prenatal Testing - Universal Syphilis Rescreening requisition - http://www.health.alberta.ca/documents/Prenatal-Syphilis-Rescreen.pdf)
    - check box - 356 – "universal syphilis rescreening at delivery"
    - collect one gel separator tube

Note: At ANY time during pregnancy for women at high risk for becoming infected or re-infected with syphilis; syphilis testing can be performed at multiple time points as required.

- use above new form HS0286
- check box – 357 – "syphilis rescreening – unscheduled"
- collect one gel separator tube

Inquiries and feedback may be directed to:

Dr. Natalia Solomon, Prenatal Program Lead, Edmonton – 780-407-7242
Dr. Kevin Fonseca, Site Prenatal Program Lead, Calgary – 403-944-1263

OR ask for the Virologist-on-Call:
Edmonton Site – Phone: 780-407-7121
Calgary Site – Phone: 403-944-1200

This bulletin has been reviewed and approved by Dr. Marie Louie, Acting Medical Director, ProvLab