



## **MLS: Laboratory Update**

### **MDH Public Health Laboratory Changing Testing Method for Syphilis Confirmation**

**April 14, 2011**

**Purpose of this Message:** To make the laboratory community aware that beginning April 15, 2011, MDH-PHL will change from the fluorescent treponemal antibody absorption (FTA) assay to the *Treponema pallidum* particle agglutination (TPPA) assay for syphilis confirmation.

#### **Background**

CDC recommends syphilis serologic screening with a nontreponemal test, such as the rapid plasma reagin (RPR), unheated serum reagin (USR) or Venereal Disease Research Laboratory (VDRL) test, to identify persons with possible untreated infection; this screening is followed by confirmation using one of several treponemal tests [i.e. fluorescent treponemal antibody absorption (FTA), *Treponema pallidum* particle agglutination (TPPA), etc.]. MDH-PHL previously performed USR for the nontreponemal test followed by FTA for treponemal confirmation. Data gathered by MDH-PHL and other laboratories indicate that TPPA is more sensitive, less labor-intensive and less prone to interpretation issues compared to FTA. This information, in addition to CDC's recommendation, supports the change to the TPPA test.

#### **Forms**

The MDH Clinical Testing and Submission Form has been changed to reflect TPPA as the syphilis confirmatory test.

Submission form can be found at: <http://www.health.state.mn.us/divs/phl/clin/forms.html>

#### **MDH Contacts**

Laboratory-related questions: call MDH Virology laboratory at: 651-201-5248; or Dave Boxrud, Acting Virology Supervisor at 651-201-5257; [dave.boxrud@state.mn.us](mailto:dave.boxrud@state.mn.us)

Questions regarding the diagnosis of syphilis including testing algorithms or interpretations as well as to report a case of syphilis, please call MDH Syphilis Surveillance Laboratory Coordinator, Cindy Lind-Livingston at 651-201-4024; [cindy.lind@state.mn.us](mailto:cindy.lind@state.mn.us)

Thank you,

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This is an update from the Minnesota Department of Health – Public Health Laboratory (MDH-PHL) and the Minnesota Laboratory System (MLS). This message is being sent to MLS laboratory contacts serving Minnesota residents. You are not required to reply to this message.

**\*\*Please forward this to all appropriate personnel within your institution and Health System\*\***