

# Physician MEMO

To | All Physicians and Allied Health Professionals  
From | Carol Purdy, MT(ASCP) Microbiology Manager  
Date | March 10, 2011  
Re | Clostridium difficile Toxin by PCR

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## S Situation

*Clostridium difficile* toxin by PCR will replace current EIA test on March 14, 2011.

## B Background

The Cepheid Xpert *C. difficile* toxin assay is a qualitative diagnostic test for rapid detection of toxin B gene sequences from unformed (liquid or soft) stool specimens collected from patients suspected of having *Clostridium difficile* infection (CDI). The test utilizes automated real-time polymerase chain reaction (PCR) to detect toxin gene sequences associated with toxin producing *C. difficile*. Due to the increased sensitivity (98.79%) of this assay, only one test is needed to detect *Clostridium difficile*.

## A Assessment

The Xpert *C. difficile* Assay is intended as an aid in the diagnosis of *Clostridium difficile* infection. This test is indicated for patients with a clinical suspicion of *Clostridium difficile* infection and diarrhea defined as three or more loose stools in a 24-hour period. Please note:

- The test name in NetAccess has not changed.
- This test will be performed daily on unformed stool specimens; formed stool specimens will be rejected.
- Only one test per patient per week is allowed, repeat requests will be cancelled.
- Patient care providers will be called with positive test results per the MDRO policy.
- *Clostridium difficile* PCR results will be posted to NetAccess under Microbiology/ PCR Tests.

## R Recommendation

Please inform all physicians and staff that *Clostridium difficile* toxin will be performed using this assay.

## Q Questions

Please direct any questions to the Microbiology Laboratory at 82923.