





Memorandum - Micro #219

To: UNC Health System Attending Physicians, Faculty Practice Physicians, Housestaff, Clinical Nurse Coordinators, Department Heads and Supervisors

From:  Melissa B. Miller, PhD
Director, Molecular Microbiology Laboratory

 Herbert C. Whinna, MD, PhD
Medical Director, McLendon Clinical Laboratories

Date: February 14, 2023

Subject: Changes to HIV RNA (Viral Load) Testing

Effective February 20, 2023, the Clinical Molecular Microbiology Laboratory at UNC Medical Center will implement a change to HIV viral load testing performed on blood (EPIC: "HIV RNA, Quantitative PCR" Test ID: LAB878).

Important changes are:

- Real-time RT-PCR detecting HIV RNA will be performed on the Abbott Alinity m instrument instead of the Abbott *m2000* Realtime System.
- Testing will be performed daily Monday through Friday decreasing the turnaround time to 1-3 days.
- The limit of detection is 20 copies/mL and the reportable linear range is 20 - 10,000,000 copies/mL (1.30 \log_{10} - 7.00 \log_{10} copies/mL). The previous assay had a reportable range of 40 - 1,000,000 copies/mL (1.60 \log_{10} - 6.00 \log_{10} copies/mL).
- Specimens with results below 20 copies/mL will be reported as "Detected, <20 copies/mL" with no further quantification provided.
- Specimens with results above the reportable range will be resulted as "Detected, >10,000,000 copies/mL" with no further quantification provided.

Remaining the same:

- Specimens with no HIV RNA detected will be reported as "Not Detected."
- Collection tube remains 6 mL pink top EDTA blood tube.
- This test requires a dedicated specimen and cannot be added on to specimens already in the laboratory.

Questions can be directed to the UNCCM Clinical Molecular Microbiology Laboratory at 984-974-1820 or Dr. Melissa Miller at Melissa.Miller@unchealth.unc.edu.