

MEMORANDUM

TO: All Regional Medical Laboratory Clients

FROM: Brittany Vaughn, MT (ASCP), Manager of Microbiology
Gerald C. Miller, PhD., Chief of Microbiology and Immunology

DATE: 11/4/13

SUBJECT: Parasite Testing

Recent literature indicates the most common parasites in the United States are *Giardia lamblia* and *Cryptosporidium* sp. In recent years, Regional Medical Laboratory performed an internal study which indicated that *Giardia* and *Cryptosporidium* accounted for over 90% of the parasites reported in our patient population. **However, *Cryptosporidium* may not be detected by the traditional O & P test.** Therefore, **antigen testing** is the preferred method for screening for these organisms as it is significantly more sensitive and effective in detecting both parasites. In addition, results from antigen testing are typically available in less than 24 hours, resulting in decreased turnaround time and better patient outcomes.

In an effort to provide excellent patient care, while decreasing the cost to the patient as well as decreasing turnaround time, Regional Medical Laboratory would like to strongly promote the use of antigen testing over the traditional ova and parasite exam. The order name of **C PARA SC** will generate the immunoassay antigen test which screens for both *Giardia lamblia* and *Cryptosporidium* sp. Specimens with negative screen result will be held for one week for convenience of physician if further testing is desired.

Please refrain from ordering the comprehensive ova and parasite test (C PARASPEC) unless the patient meets one or more of the following conditions:

- Previous *Giardia*/*Cryptosporidium* screen is negative, but persistent diarrhea symptoms continue.
- Recent travel outside of the U.S.
- Immunocompromised patient
- New immigrant
- Transplant patient
- Special circumstances

The CPT codes for C PARA SC are 87328 and 87329.

Please contact Brittany Vaughn, MT(ASCP), Manager of Microbiology or Gerald C. Miller, PhD., Chief of Microbiology & Immunology at 918-744-2553 or 800-722-8077 with questions regarding this memo.