

MEMO

Date: November 20, 2020

To: Service Delivery Organizations, COVID-19 Testing Sites, Acute, Community and Long-Term Care Leads

From: Cathy McMahon, Co-Chair COVID-19 Screening and Result Reporting Working Group

Re: **Tips to Reduce Leaking of COVID-19 Specimens**

COVID-19 samples that leak during transport or upon arrival to the lab will be rejected and the individual's test will be cancelled.

Cadham Provincial Laboratory has provided the following tips to reduce the volume of leaking specimens. Please share these broadly with your testing site teams:

- When using a transport medium that is **room temperature** stable, it is NOT necessary to warm the viral transport medium (VTM) by removing it ahead of time
- For **frozen** transport medium, warm the viral transport media (VTM) by taking out ahead of time and standing right side up to warm; do not use hands to warm as this may make the fluid pool in the lid. Stand the tube up overnight, so the liquid all drains to the bottom
- Keep tubes in the upright position at all times (both before and after sample collection) and including transportation time to the testing lab for processing
- Flick the lid a few times prior to opening
- When opening the VTM vial, open slightly at first to allow the drop to fall to the bottom of the tube and then continue opening completely
- Cut swab short enough so the end does not touch the seal
- Once the swab has been placed in the vial, tighten the tube on the threads so they are secure
- All samples should be refrigerated after collection until they are packaged up and send to the lab.

Thank you for your continued support.