



THE STATE
of **ALASKA**
GOVERNOR BILL WALKER

Department of
Health and Social Services

DIVISION of PUBLIC HEALTH
State Virology Laboratory

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Dear Providers,

I regret to inform you that the Alaska State Virology Laboratory will be discontinuing viral culture services after August 1, 2016. Discontinued sample types include (but not limited to):

- Swabs for herpes simplex virus detection
- Cerebral spinal fluids
- Respiratory specimens
- Stool specimens
- Tissue specimens

Despite these reductions, respiratory specimens can still be submitted for respiratory virus panel testing by PCR. Stool and vomitus specimens associated with suspected norovirus outbreaks can still be submitted with notification to our State of Alaska Section of Epidemiology (1-800-269-8000).

We are diligently pursuing other testing methodologies to replace our viral culture services. A new PCR panel will be available within the coming year to more thoroughly investigate infections associated with cerebral spinal fluids and herpes infections using molecular techniques. Additional sequencing technologies are also being validated so that we can offer better services for novel and rare viruses. We will update you regularly so you are aware of when these new services will be made available.

Although we are saddened by losing a methodology that we have built our foundation on from the conception of the Alaska State Virology Laboratory, we are hopeful that these changes will bring about more modern methodologies to help you differentiate viral disease affecting your patients.

As always, please do not hesitate to call us with questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jayme Parker".

Jayme Parker, MSPH, MB(ASCP)^{CM}
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