

December 30, 2013

Dear Laboratory Director:

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has recently implemented a whole genome sequencing (WGS) program for *Listeria*. The program goal is to evaluate how WGS will impact routine surveillance and improve the detection and investigation of outbreaks. The CDC is requesting the submission of all clinical *Listeria* isolates as close to real-time as possible. Please submit all *Listeria* isolates to the PA Bureau of Laboratories (BOL) as soon as possible using the standard BOL submission form.

There are approximately 1500 cases of malaria reported every year in the United States, virtually all of which are acquired in other countries. In 2012, Pennsylvania had 52 cases of malaria. Limited information is available about the emergence and spread of malaria drug resistance. In order to address this, CDC's malaria branch has increased the drug resistance surveillance program and has requested the submission of *Plasmodium*-positive whole blood samples. The BOL offers microscopic confirmation and speciation of malaria, using electronic transmission of images to the CDC's parasitology group. Send stained slides and 3-5mL whole blood in an EDTA blood tube to the BOL. Ship these samples at room temperature. Please fill out the BOL submission form and include travel history and drug therapy information in the open space. In the "test requested" field, fill in "Identification" or "Surveillance only." For other parasitology services available through CDC, refer to www.dpd.cdc.gov/dpdx/.

In Pennsylvania, submission of Shiga-like toxin *Escherichia coli* (STEC) is required by law. Either the STEC-positive isolate or broth culture can be sent to the BOL. Send the broth culture (minimum of 5 mL) with a cold pack or send the isolate on an agar slant at room temperature. BOL performs a PCR test for confirmation and isolates the STEC for serotyping. All STEC isolates proceed to Pulsed-Field Gel Electrophoresis (PFGE) for routine outbreak surveillance. Complete the standard submission form and request "STEC." Before you implement non-culture-based methods for *Salmonella* and *Shigella*, please consult the BOL to discuss the appropriate submission to ensure that these pathogens are available for surveillance work and outbreak detection.

In 2012, Pennsylvania had 234 cases of tuberculosis, of which 188 were culture confirmed. A goal of the TB control program is to obtain TB drug susceptibility testing and genotyping results for each laboratory culture-confirmed TB case. In 2012, Pennsylvania's submission to the genotyping program was 89%. We appreciate your continued efforts in the submission of MTBC isolates for the genotyping program. If drug susceptibilities are needed, order "TB susceptibilities" and if not, order "TB genotyping only."

For a complete list of laboratory services along with laboratory submission forms, see the Microbiology Directory of Services located on the BOL's website (listed below) under Clinical Microbiology. There is no charge for any of the laboratory services listed above. However, the BOL does not have funding to cover the packaging and shipping costs. If you have any questions, please contact Lisa Dettinger, ldettinger@pa.gov or 484-870-6414.

Sincerely,

/signed/

Julia A. Kiehlbauch, Ph.D., D(ABMM)
Bureau Director, PA Department of Health Bureau of Laboratories