Subject: 2022-2023 Influenza and COVID-19 Testing Guidance

Dear VUMC Clinicians:

Influenza season 2021-2022 is ongoing. Due to the COVID-19 global pandemic, it is difficult to predict upcoming influenza activity and it is anticipated that these viruses will co-circulate in the upcoming season. Seasonal influenza continues to circulate in our region and SARS-COV-2 activity remains high.


Testing for Influenza and COVID-19

In the Fall of 2022, influenza and COVID-19 testing will include the following options:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Test</th>
<th>Test locations</th>
<th>Use</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Influenza + COVID – 19 PCR</td>
<td>Select high-throughput clinics</td>
<td>Rule in and rule out influenza or COVID-19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Liat)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Influenza antigen (Sofia)</td>
<td>Select clinics</td>
<td>Rule in influenza</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Influenza + COVID-19 PCR (Roche 6800)</td>
<td>Vanderbilt Medical Laboratories (Time to results, 24 hr)</td>
<td>Rule in and rule out influenza and COVID-19</td>
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Providers must be aware that the rapid point of care influenza antigen test (i.e., Sofia) is hampered by a sensitivity of <60% for detection of influenza. A negative Sofia test result should not be used to rule-out influenza infection or determine need for influenza treatment, due to this limited sensitivity.

COVID-19 antigen tests are not used at VUMC for patient care, due to poor sensitivity. These should not be used to rule out COVID-19 infection.

In cases of high clinical probability, initial treatment decisions should be based on clinical assessment in conjunction with point of care or laboratory testing. No single test is 100% accurate to diagnose influenza or COVID-19.

Point of care or home-based antigen tests should not be used as the sole diagnostic method for the following populations. PCR tests should be performed, either by Liat if available, or by sending a specimen to the central laboratory:

- High-risk patients, including immunocompromised persons, who present with influenza-like illness, pneumonia or nonspecific respiratory illness
- Patients who present with acute onset of respiratory symptoms and exacerbation of chronic medical conditions (e.g., asthma, COPD, heart failure)
- Symptomatic patients aged 65 years and older who would be considered for Paxlovid or other treatment for COVID-19
- Patients with symptoms that will result in admission to the hospital

References: