

DATE:	22 December 2025
TO:	Physicians & Staff at the Grande Prairie Regional Hospital; and North Zone Medical Officers of Health; Chief Medical Officer of Health, Alberta Health
FROM:	Alberta Precision Laboratories (APL) – Public Health Laboratory
RE:	Cessation of Rapid Syphilis and HIV Antibody Testing at Grande Prairie Regional Hospital, APL Acute Care Laboratory

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Key Message

- As of the 31st October 2025, rapid syphilis and HIV antibody testing has been discontinued at the acute care APL laboratory, Grande Prairie Regional Hospital, due to a lack of uptake.
- The number of tests performed at this site was significantly less than the numbers projected and multiple attempts to increase testing were unsuccessful.

Background

- In July 2021, a provincial syphilis outbreak was declared with the highest rates recorded in the Edmonton & North zones, with >10% of female cases occurring in pregnant persons in 2021. Since 2014, more than 300 cases of congenital syphilis cases in babies have been recorded ([Syphilis Outbreak | Alberta Health Services](#)).
- Grande Prairie Regional hospital was the second facility in the provincial rollout for rapid syphilis/HIV testing to identify and treat new cases of syphilis. However, over an 18-month period the number of tests performed has been significantly less than projected, therefore maintaining the resources to keep the testing available is not cost-effective.

Questions/Concerns

- Dr. Kevin Fonseca, Clinical Virologist, APL - Public Health Microbiology (kevin.fonseca@albertaprecisionlabs.ca)
- Dr. Hong Yuan Zhou, Medical Microbiologist, APL – Public Health Microbiology (hong.zhou@albertaprecisionlabs.ca)
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Approved by

- Dr. Graham Tipples, Medical-Scientific Director, Public Health, APL
- Dr. Byron Berenger, Medical Microbiologist and Provincial Microbiology Section Chief, APL