

DATE:	2 March 2026
TO:	All Physicians and Healthcare Providers
FROM:	Alberta Precision Laboratories (APL) – Public Health Laboratory
RE:	Changes to HIV NAT and HIV-1 Viral Load Testing

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Key Message

- Effective 24 February 2026, HIV-1 Viral Load (quantitative) and HIV NAT (qualitative) testing is being transitioned from the Abbott m2000 platform to the Hologic Panther Aptima Quant assay at the Public Health Laboratory, Edmonton.
- On February 2, 2026, HIV-1 viral load testing at the Public Health Laboratory, Calgary was transitioned to the Hologic Panther Aptima Quant Assay.
- No changes are being made to the HIV-1 NAT or HIV-1 viral load orderable.
- Due to improved sensitivity of the Aptima Quant assay, the limit of detection for HIV-1 viral load will change from 40 copies/mL to 30 copies/mL.

Background

- HIV-1 viral load testing was previously performed on the Abbott m2000 platform at the Public Health Laboratory, Edmonton.
- The transition from the Abbott m2000 platform to the Aptima HIV-1 Quant Dx assay on the Panther Hologics platform, allows for greater flexibility and volume throughput in addition to improved assay performance. Additionally, the collection and transport requirements for Aptima HIV-1 Quant assay are expected to reduce the numbers of cancelations arising from the more stringent requirements of the prior assay.

Questions/Concerns

- Dr. William Stokes, Medical Microbiologist – Public Health Microbiology (william.stokes@albertaprecisionlabs.ca)
- Dr. Kevin Fonseca, Clinical Virologist, APL - Public Health Microbiology (kevin.fonseca@albertaprecisionlabs.ca)
- Dr. Byron Berenger, Medical Microbiologist and Provincial Microbiology Section Chief, APL

Approved by

- Dr. Graham Tipples, Medical-Scientific Director, Public Health, APL