

Labstract – June 2011

Coxiella burnetii*, *Brucella Spp.* and *Francisella tularensis **- Changes in serological testing algorithms**

To Health Care Providers

As of June 15, 2011 the Public Health Ontario (the new operating name for the Ontario Agency for Health Protection and Promotion) public health laboratories (PHLs) will implement changes to discontinue complement fixation (CF) serological testing used for screening of *Coxiella burnetii* (Q-fever), *Brucella Spp.* and *Francisella tularensis* and proceed directly to methods currently used for confirmation of the CF test for these agents. There will be no changes to specimen collection requirements.

***C. burnetii* (Q – fever):**

PHL will discontinue screening for antibodies against Q fever using CF testing method. Instead, specimens will be tested directly for IgM and IgG using indirect immunofluorescent assay (IFA). The IFA is considered to be the gold standard as it is highly sensitive and specific. The results will be interpreted and reported as per manufacturer's recommendations. PHL is currently using Health Canada approved test kits from Focus Diagnostics.

***Brucella Spp./Francisella tularensis*:**

PHL will continue to test for antibodies against *Brucella Spp.* and *F. tularensis* using the serum tube agglutination method (STA), but will discontinue supplementary testing by the CF test method.

New Public Health Ontario (PHO) Autofax Service

You can now receive results as soon as they are released by the medical technologists by subscribing to our Autofax service. To subscribe to Autofax or if you have any concerns, please contact our customer service department at 1-877-604-4567.

For further information:

- PHO Customer Service Centre toll free at **1-877-604-4567** or **416-235-6556**
- For the PHO Specimen Collection Guide and previous Labstracts, refer to <http://www.oahpp.ca/publichealthlaboratories.php>
- The current version of the PHL laboratory requisition form is available at <http://www.oahpp.ca/resources/requisitions.html>
- To subscribe to future PHO Labstracts, please e-mail labstracts@oahpp.ca