

MEMO

DATE: 5/14/2020

TO: SHA Staff and Practitioners

FROM: Department of Laboratory Medicine

RE: Point of Care COVID-19 Testing on the GeneXpert

Laboratory based COVID-19 Point of Care Testing is currently available in Saskatchewan using the Cepheid GeneXpert® instrument and Xpress SARS-CoV-2 assay. These instruments can be used in community and hospital laboratories without molecular testing infrastructure, and can yield results in <1 hour from specimen receipt in the lab.

GeneXpert® instruments are installed (or soon to be installed) in 20 Saskatchewan locations:

North: Ile a la Crosse, La Loche, La Ronge, Lloydminster, Meadow Lake, North Battleford, Onion Lake, Hatchet Lake, Pelican Narrows, Prince Albert, Tisdale

South: All Nations Health Hospital, Kindersley, Moose Jaw, Moosimin, Weyburn, Yorkton, Swift Current

Urban: Regina and Saskatoon

Testing kits for use with these instruments are in extremely limited supply globally. Allocation of these limited resources during the response to the pandemic requires a strategic approach that focuses on fairness and transparency. The decision to use this rapid turnaround test, rather than the high volume batched tests available in Regina and Saskatoon, is a medical decision based on public health and patient care priorities. At both a national and provincial level there is broad agreement that this testing should generally be prioritized for remote locations that otherwise face significant delays in testing.

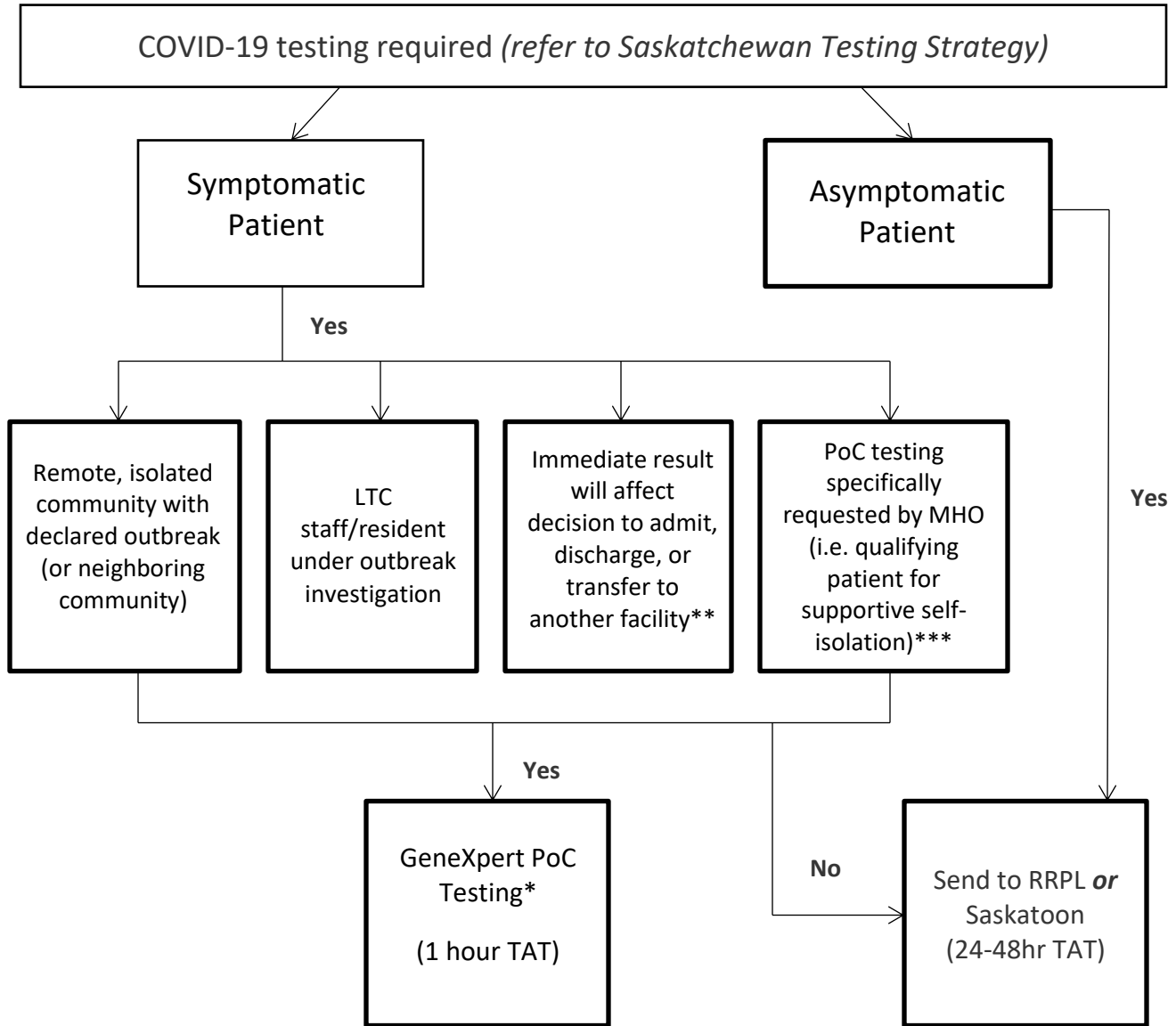
Saskatchewan currently receives 300 GeneXpert® Xpress SARS-CoV-2 tests per week. There is no indication this will increase in the near future.

Effective May 19, 2020 a limited number of Xpress SARS-CoV-2 tests will be available at all locations with GeneXpert® instruments in the province. Please refer to the **attached algorithm** for recommended prioritization of these tests. Additional local prioritization may be needed, and is encouraged, if these indications lead to demand in excess of supply.

Safety | Accountability | Respect | Collaboration | Compassion

With a commitment to a philosophy of Patient and Family Centred Care

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* If a repeat test is indicated, GeneXpert PoC testing should not be used for the repeat test

A negative test PoC test for a symptomatic patient **does not negate the need for precautions where otherwise required (i.e. COVID screen positive). Refer to **CV-19 A0001 COVID-19 Acute Care Placement and Precautions Algorithm** and **CV-19 A0002 Modification of Precautions for COVID-19 Negative Inpatients and Residents**.

***Persons who are vulnerably housed may only qualify for supportive self-isolation with a positive test. Method of testing for HCW should be at the direction of Public Health/MHO.

HCW=healthcare worker
 LTC=long-term care facility
 TAT=turnaround time