

<b>PROTOCOL:</b> VPDCP PATIENT REFERRALS TO PUBLIC HEALTH CENTERS FOR NASOPHARYNGEAL PERTUSSIS PCR TESTING	PAGE 1
	OF 3

**PURPOSE:** To establish guidelines, roles, and responsibilities for referral of patients from the Vaccine Preventable Disease Control Program (VPDCP) to Clinic Services (CS) to expedite nasopharyngeal (NP) specimen collection and pertussis polymerase chain reaction (PCR) testing for pertussis suspects not identified nor followed by a District Public Health Nurse (DPHN). NP testing is required prior to the start of antibiotics for accurate pertussis results.

**PROTOCOL:** All Department of Public Health (DPH) employees who work in Clinic Services and the VPDCP shall adhere to the guidelines stated herein.

**SCOPE:** This protocol applies to Registered Nurses (RNs), Licensed Vocational Nurses (LVNs), Physicians, Business Office Staff, Epidemiologists, Research Analysts and Centers for Disease & Prevention (CDC) Public Health Associates

**PROCEDURE:**

1. VPDCP Team Member (which can include an epidemiologist, research analyst, and CDC public health associate) will contact the Clinic Services Business Office (BO) Supervisor and/or designee by telephone and email with cc' to CS Nurse Manager and Supervising Clinic Nurse of the Public Health Center closest to the patient's home address to coordinate and schedule a Nurse Walk-In appointment for patient's NP swab procedure. The list of Public Health Centers is available at <http://www.publichealth.lacounty.gov/chs/phcenters.htm>
  - a. VPDCP will provide patient information to CS BO to open a chart, create a patient Financial Information Number (FIN), and schedule patient's appointment.
  - b. CS BO will contact the on-call VPDCP Team Member via telephone at (213) 351-7800 and send email to VPDCP ([vpdc@ph.lacounty.gov](mailto:vpdc@ph.lacounty.gov)) with cc' to CS charge nurse/designee providing patient information, appointment information, and FIN.
  
2. The on-call VPDCP Team Member will email the FIN to the VPDCP provider to place the order.

3. The VPDCP Provider will place an order of Biofire Respiratory Multiplex PCR Panel Test for *Bordetella pertussis/parapertussis* DNA Qual RT PCR in ORCHID as a future order to allow testing within the first 3-4 weeks of cough onset.
4. VPDCP Team Member will contact patient and direct them to go to Nurse Walk-in Clinics for NP swabbing.
5. The CS BO will:
  - a. Educate patient per DPH Policy – 320, “Informed Consent,” and obtain consent from the patient or patient’s parent/legal guardian.
  - b. Perform check-in process & obtain any BO required documentation.
6. The CS RN or LVN will:
  - a. Review the NP specimen order in ORCHID.
  - b. Gather equipment/supplies and label all specimen-holding containers and media per MD/ND – 111, “Laboratory Specimens: General Information.”  
**Supplies needed:** Universal Transport Medium (UTM) with the pink liquid medium.
  - c. Identify the patient per Standards of Practice [MD/ND Policy 101 – Patient Identity Verification \(Prior to Providing Health Care Services\)](#)
  - d. Screen patient for nasal septal or palate defects. If the patient has a deviated septum or blockage that creates difficulty in obtaining the specimen from one nostril, use the same swab to obtain the specimen from the other nostril.
  - e. Explain the procedure to the patient or parent/guardian per [MD/ND Policy 117- Nasopharyngeal Specimen Collection](#).
  - f. Collect, label and store the NP swab per [MD/ND Policy 117- Nasopharyngeal Specimen Collection](#) and MD/ND 102, “Standard Precautions for the Prevention of Infections.”
    - i. Immediately place the swab in a Universal Viral Transport medium, which contains the pink liquid (same one used for Influenza testing). **Note:** This is

---

different than Policy 117, step 14. **(Do not use Regan-Lowe Deep due to short shelf life).**

- ii. Store the collected specimen at 4° C in a refrigerator at the Public Health Center.
  - iii. The specimen must be transported at 4°-10° C with an ice pack that is not frozen solid and sent to Public Health Laboratory within 48 hours.
  - iv. Refer to [Pertussis Testing Video: Collecting a Nasopharyngeal Swab Clinical Specimen](#)
  - g. Remove gloves and perform hand hygiene.
  - h. RN or LVN will document per Policy MD/ND – 121, “Medical Records Documentation.”
7. VPDCP will access the patient’s NP lab results in ORCHID and notify patient of results.

**REFERENCES:**

Policy DPH – 320: Informed Consent

Policy MD/ND – 101: Patient Identify Verification (Prior to Providing Health Care Services)

Policy MD/ND – 102: Standard Precautions for the Prevention of Infections

Policy MD/ND – 111: Laboratory Specimens: General Information

Policy MD/ND – 117: Nasopharyngeal Specimen Collection

Policy MD/ND – 121: Medical Records Documentation