



Rhode Island Department of Health
Division of State Laboratories & Medical Examiner
50 Orms St., Providence, RI 02904
401.222.5600
401.222.6985 fax
www.health.ri.gov

Memo

Date: December 16, 2019

To: RIDOH State Health Laboratories Ordering Providers

From: Dr. Richard Huard, Chief of Biological Sciences, State Health Laboratories

Re: **Bordetella PCR testing / change in transport medium**

Effective January 02, 2020, the Rhode Island State Health Laboratory (RISHL) will begin pertussis (whooping cough) testing using the Aries Bordetella Assay (Luminex Corp.). This assay is a FDA-approved qualitative real-time PCR test for the detection and identification of *Bordetella pertussis* and *Bordetella parapertussis* in nasopharyngeal (NPS) swab specimens from patients suspected of having pertussis. This assay will replace current practice at the RISHL of performing both a culture and a laboratory developed real-time PCR assay for *B. pertussis*.

The approved NPS swab specimen transport media for the Aries Bordetella Assay is universal transport media (UTM) (formerly, testing was performed on swabs in Regan-Lowe transport medium). Updated instructions for specimen collection and transport will be included in the collection kits provided by the RISHL (attached). Please refer to the RISHL Clinical Specimen Submission Guidance for Bordetella pertussis/parapertussis

(<https://health.ri.gov/programs/laboratory/biological/about/specimensubmission/>). Left and right nasopharyngeal swabs are considered as one specimen. **Following a brief transition period, swabs sent in Regan-Lowe transport medium for pertussis testing will not be accepted.**

Please contact the RISHL Special Pathogens with further questions (401) 222-5587.