



Memo to: Healthcare Personnel
From: Alverno Clinical Laboratories, Department of Molecular Biology/Flow Cytometry
Subject: **New test beginning January 20, 2009 – HIV RNA Quantitation by bDNA**

We are pleased to announce a new service for our healthcare providers, viral load testing for HIV by Branched Chain DNA technology. HIV-1 RNA quantitation is useful in patients to assess prognosis, monitor progression of HIV-1 infection, determine when to initiate therapy, and monitor the effectiveness of antiretroviral therapy.

Human immunodeficiency virus type 1 (HIV-1) has been identified as the primary cause of Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome (AIDS). This lethal retrovirus is spread by sexual contact, exposure to infected blood or blood products, and perinatal transmission.

The ability to measure viral load is a valuable tool in the management of HIV-1 infected patients. An increase in viral load has been shown to correlate with progression of HIV-1 disease, as characterized by decreasing CD4+ cell counts and increasing symptoms. Measurement of HIV-1 RNA plasma levels provides a direct assessment of viremia and should be used in conjunction with CD4+ T-cell counts.

The reportable range is 75 to 500,000 copies/mL.

This test is FDA-approved and manufactured by Siemens.

SPECIMEN COLLECTION

Specimen: 3 mL Plasma. Plasma only; no serum. Specimens collected in Heparin tubes are unacceptable for testing. Collect blood in sterile tubes containing EDTA anticoagulant (lavender-top) (preferred) or PPT (white-top) (acceptable) tube. ACD anticoagulant will yield results approximately 15% lower when compared to EDTA tubes, due to the dilution effect. Separate plasma from the cells by centrifugation within 2 hours after collection, transfer the plasma to a separate plastic, screw-capped vial, freeze and ship frozen.

Specimen stability: Room Temperature: 4 hours; Refrigerated: 48 hours; Frozen: **-70°C** for 90 days.

Production schedule: Batched 1-2 times a week.

The Soft order code: HIVQT.

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