



December 16, 2019

To All OSPHL Tuberculosis Testing  
Clients,

The Oregon State Public Health Laboratory (OSPHL) continually works with the OHA Tuberculosis Program to provide the best service possible to support your tuberculosis control efforts.

#### What is changing?

Effective January 1, 2020, the OSPHL will discontinue routine GeneXpert testing on smear-negative sputum specimens. OSPHL will perform GeneXpert on sputum specimens from smear-negative patients only upon clinician request. The OSPHL will continue to perform GeneXpert on smear positive sputum specimens. Because of this change, GeneXpert results will be released one business day after AFB smear results are generated.

#### Why this change?

This change is being made after close consultation with the OHA TB Program and CDC and is based on an analysis of the past five years of Oregon tuberculosis testing data. Over five years, only four specimens were AFB smear and culture negative, and NAAT positive. All four patients were already under medical supervision. This change also brings the OSPHL in line with other public health laboratories' tuberculosis testing algorithms.

#### Requesting GeneXpert on Smear-Negative Specimens

To request a GeneXpert test on a sputum specimen from a smear-negative specimen, please contact the OSPHL tuberculosis testing bench at 503-693-4100. Clinicians may request testing directly from OSPHL. Approval from the OHA TB Program is not required.

Specimens are retained for seven calendar days after receipt. If the GeneXpert is requested later than seven days after specimen receipt, the OSPHL will not be able to perform the GeneXpert test.

Please contact the OSPHL General Microbiology Testing Section with questions:

- Marisa Frieder, Section Manager – 503-693-4139 – [marisa.d.frieder@dhsosha.state.or.us](mailto:marisa.d.frieder@dhsosha.state.or.us)
- Caitlin Miranda – TB Testing Lead – 503-693-4144 – [caitlin.miranda@dhsosha.state.or.us](mailto:caitlin.miranda@dhsosha.state.or.us)

Sincerely,

Marisa Frieder, PhD  
General Microbiology Manager

Heidi Behm, RN, MPH  
TB Controller/Nurse Consultant