



Date: February 23, 2023

To: Physicians and Laboratory Directors

From: Public Health Nursing-Communicable Disease and Health Officers

Subject: Syphilis Confirmatory Testing and Reporting

California is experiencing an increase in the number of reported syphilis cases. Our main concern is delay in patient care and investigative consultation. Our local health department is taking a high priority with Syphilis cases that a provider may suspect based on symptoms or presentation; even before testing is complete. We would like to provide assistance in streamlining the process for providers.

CDPH requires these tests for Syphilis: A screening/nontreponemal test (RPR or VDRL) with reflex to titer should always be ordered and a confirmatory/treponemal test (TPPA, FTA-Abs or MHA-TP).

We ask laboratory directors to also inform physicians that this option is available at your laboratories. The tests above are essential to case investigation per CDPH. We are contracted with Solano County Public Health Lab if your facility does not have the option of RPR with reflex to titer and TPPA. We can send their lab requisition if needed.

If you suspect a possible case of syphilis, please call us at 707-272-8035.

Syphilis is to be reported **within one working day** to Public Health.

Fax us at 707-472-2639 the Confidential Morbidity Report (CMR) for Syphilis and the last note of the patient's visit of the provider who ordered the tests. This will help us greatly with investigation and consulting efficiently with the ordering provider when the tests are complete and available.

Below we have some helpful provider notes and clinical resources; including a Syphilis Testing Algorithm Quick-sheet. See the back of this letter to view. We also have a titer guide infographic that we have found very helpful. Just ask our team and we will email you a copy. Thank you for your understanding and cooperation. We look forward to working together for the benefit of our community.

CDPH/CAPTC STD Treatment-Version Updated- November 2021– Provider Resource

[California Sexually Transmitted Disease \(STD\) Treatment Guidelines for Adults and Adolescents, 2021](#)

CDC Guidance for Neurosyphilis, ocular syphilis, and otosyphilis –Version Updated– July 2021

[Neurosyphilis, Ocular Syphilis, and Otosyphilis - STI Treatment Guidelines \(cdc.gov\)](#)

CDPH Neurosyphilis Symptom Guide: [Neurosyphilis \(ca.gov\)](#)

CDC Guidance for Congenital Syphilis–Version Updated– July 2021

[Congenital Syphilis - STI Treatment Guidelines \(cdc.gov\)](#)

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Charles Evans". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Charles Evans, M.D.

Deputy Health Officer

Syphilis Testing Algorithms (Traditional and Reverse Sequence)

Traditional Algorithm (order RPR with reflex to titer with confirmatory TPPA)

| Tests with Titer RPR/VDRL quantitative | Confirmatory Testing TPPA, FTA-Abs or MHA-TP | Interpretation | Recommended Actions |
|---|---|--|---|
| Non-reactive | Non-Reactive | NOT a case | N/A |
| Reactive (with titers) | Non-Reactive | Biological False Positive or NOT a case | Repeat tests ² |
| Non-reactive | Reactive | Previously treated, late, and untreated, OR early primary case– Is it a case? -YES | Repeat tests ² and PHD Case Investigation ³ |
| Reactive (with titers) | Reactive | Is it a Case?-YES | PHD Case Investigation ³ |

Reverse Sequence Algorithm (order RPR with reflex to titer with confirmatory TPPA)

| EIA | RPR/VRDL quantitative With Titers | TPPA | Interpretation | Recommended Actions |
|--------------|--------------------------------------|--------------|--|-------------------------------------|
| Non-reactive | - | - | NOT a case | N/A |
| Reactive | Non-Reactive | Non-Reactive | Biological False Positive/ NOT a case | Repeat tests ² |
| Reactive | Non-Reactive | Reactive | Is it a case? -YES | PHD Case Investigation ³ |
| Reactive | Reactive (<u>with</u> titers) | Reactive | Is it a Case?-YES | PHD Case Investigation ³ |

Algorithm Notes: ²Repeat tests 2-3 weeks after initial test to observe rise in RPR titer or EIA/TPPA seroconversion;

³Case investigation done by Communicable Disease Investigator (CDI)/Public Health Nurse (PHN) for surveillance and disease control.

[Napa-Solano-Yolo-Marin-Mendocino County Public Health Laboratory](#)

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