

Ministry of Health

Testing Planning and
Implementation

777 Bay Street, 19th Floor
Toronto ON M5G 2C8

Telephone: 416 327-7727

Ministère de la Santé

Planification et mise en œuvre
relatives au dépistage

777, rue Bay, 19^e étage
Toronto ON M5G 2C8

Téléphone : 416 327-7727

DATE: **September 28, 2021**

TO: Assistant Deputy Ministers of all Provincial Antigen Screening Program participants, and related stakeholders

FROM: Fredrika Scarth
Director, Testing Strategy Coordination Branch
Pandemic Response and Recovery Division, Ministry of Health

SUBJECT: **Updates to Rapid Antigen Test Supply for the Provincial Antigen Screening Program**

This memo serves to inform you of changes to the Provincial Antigen Screening Program (PASP) with respect to approval for the use of the BD Veritor rapid antigen test without an analyzer machine, and the expansion of the supply of rapid antigen test types being deployed through the Program.

Broadening the Use of BD Veritor

The province has determined that it is appropriate to use the BD Veritor rapid antigen test as a visually-read device, without the use of an analyzer machine. This will enable broader uptake of the current supply of BD Veritor tests we have in provincial inventory, as the use of an analyzer has previously been a barrier to implementation and deployment for some sites. The use of BD Veritor as a visually-read device will be particularly helpful for enabling at-home screening.

Sites can still choose to use the analyzer machines, and sites that already have analyzer machines can continue to request BD Veritor to use with their existing devices when placing orders.

Diversifying Provincial Rapid Antigen Test Supply

To date, the Abbott Panbio has been the most widely deployed rapid antigen tests to sectors and sites participating in the PASP. However, there are several comparable Health Canada-approved tests that have been procured by the Federal Government for allocation to provinces. Ontario is therefore incorporating these additional types of rapid antigen tests to ensure that supply needs continue to be met for sites participating in PASP, including those sectors and organizations implementing mandatory vaccine policies at the direction of the Chief Medical Officer of Health (CMOH).

All rapid antigen tests deployed through the PASP will have comparable performance specifications such as sensitivity, accuracy, storage requirements, and shelf life, and they can all be used as visually-read devices. The steps needed to perform each test are very similar.

The first new test being imminently introduced into our provincial supply is the **BTNX rapid antigen test**. As outlined above, the test is currently packaged and used the same way as the Abbott Panbio and can be easily broken down into “mini kits” to support at-home self-screening.

Moving forward, when placing an order, tests will be deployed interchangeably to participating sites based on inventory availability. The e-Health and the Order Management System (OMS) ordering systems are being updated to reflect this.

Supports and Resources Available

The Ministry of Health, Ministry of Government and Consumer Services and Ontario Health recognize that this will require some significant support for change management, both for partner ministries and with participating organizations. To ensure support, a number of resources are being updated or created, and made available on the [Ontario Health website](#) such as training documents and videos on how to use tests, self-screening and creating mini kits. Program information housed online will also be updated shortly and the key messages document that is attached to this memo can be distributed broadly or leveraged for your own internal communications.

Key Contact Information

For questions about the Provincial Antigen Screening Program, please contact the Ministry of Health by way of email to: Heather.Nichol@ontario.ca

For questions about antigen point-of-care tests, please contact Ontario Health by way of email to: covid19testing@ontariohealth.ca

Thank you for your continued collaboration and ongoing support to support COVID-19 testing in Ontario.

Sincerely,

Fredrika Scarth

Fredrika Scarth
Director, Testing Strategy Coordination Branch, Pandemic Response and Recovery

c: Melissa Thomson, Assistant Deputy Minister, Pandemic Response and Recovery, Ministry of Health

Doug Kent, Assistant Deputy Minister, Supply Chain Stabilization, Ministry of Health

Jackie Korecki, Director, Supply Chain Stabilization, Ministry of Health

Matthew Anderson, President and Chief Executive Officer, Ontario Health

Michele Henry, Director, Provincial Diagnostic Laboratory Network, Ontario Health