



**New PCR Assay for Group A Strep (GAS) Testing
in Pharyngeal Specimens
Discontinuation of the GAS Antigen Test (BSAA)**

Effective March 12, 2019, Laboratory Alliance's microbiology department will discontinue the GAS antigen test as we will be offering a new PCR test service, called the Group A Strep DNA (GASM), for the detection of Group A streptococci (GAS) in pharyngeal specimens. The new molecular assay can be performed on an expedited basis. The Group A Strep DNA (GASM) assay replaces the previously used enzyme immunoassay (EIA) test (BSAA) where negative results were reflexed to a molecular test which was performed in a batch mode once per day.

The advantages of using the PCR assay over the EIA method are that the molecular assay has a near 100% sensitivity and, because of that, specimens with negative PCR test results need not be reflexed for further testing.

The GAS PCR assay can be performed as an "expedited" test with final test results available within two hours of specimen receipt.

Importantly, pharyngeal specimens for GAS PCR testing must be collected and submitted to the microbiology department using the Eswab specimen collector/transport system. The Eswab specimen collectors can be obtained by contacting Laboratory Alliance's Client Services (315-461-3008). If other collectors, such as a Red cap collector, are received, an alternative molecular assay will be performed. These are performed daily in the morning.

Test Name:	GROUP A STREP DNA
Test Code:	GASM
Specimen requirements:	Throat swab collected using a White cap Eswab liquid Amies
Storage and Transport:	Transport at 15°C to 30°C or 2°C to 8°C
Stability:	Store at 15 °C to 30°C for 2 days, 2°C to 8°C for 6 days
Unacceptable Conditions:	Collectors using other than Eswab including gel transport media, pledget transport media or dry swabs
Testing Scheduled:	Daily
CPT Codes:	87651
Billing Code:	3010454
Reference Range:	Negative

Please contact Russell Rawling, Microbiology Manager at (315) 410-7060 (russellrawling@lacny.com) or Dr. Paul Granato, Director of Microbiology at (315) 410-7036 (paulgranatophd@lacny.com) if you have any questions about this change and new test service.