

December 20, 2024

To All OSPHL Clients,

Beginning January 1, 2025, the Oregon State Public Health Laboratory (OSPHL) will discontinue testing for the H7 antigen in *Escherichia coli* isolates. Additional details are provided below. Please share this message with your colleagues who may need this information.

Why is this change being made?

The manufacturer of the H7 antiserum required for serotyping has discontinued production. No suitable alternative reagents are available. In addition, OSPHL is working to replace serological testing with a more accurate testing method using whole genome sequencing.

What is not changing?

OSPHL will continue to test for Shiga-toxin producing *E. coli* (STEC) using RT-PCR and *E. coli* O157 using biochemical methodologies. Results of each of these tests will continue to be reported on clinical patient reports.

There are no changes to specimen acceptance criteria and no operational changes need to be implemented by your facility.

What about surveillance and outbreak detection activities?

OSPHL will continue to identify *E. coli* O157:H7 by whole genome sequencing and share this information with public health partners for outbreak detection and response. This activity is for surveillance only and will not be reported for clinical or patient care purposes.

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What are OSPHL's future testing plans?

OSPHL is in the process of validating whole genome sequencing for identification of *E. coli* for clinical reporting, including *E. coli* O157:H7. Our laboratory does not have an anticipated date of implementation but will notify clients when implementation nears.

Thank you for your understanding and collaboration. Please contact our team with questions:

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Sincerely,

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