

Subject: Rh Testing Change

Effective Date: 3/16/2010

Explanation of Change:

Following the lead of the Puget Sound Blood Center, Northwest Clinical Laboratory has discontinued testing for weak D antigen also known as “partial D” or “Du” in adults (including OB patients). Patients previously reported Rh (D) weak positive will now be reported Rh (D) negative.

In the past, weak D patients were treated as Rh positive because they have at least part of the antigen. However, some individuals demonstrate antibody production to the part of D they do not have when transfused with normal Rh positive blood. This may result in a transfusion reaction. Likewise, a weak D mother can form antibodies if exposed to the Rh positive blood of her baby.

Since a weak D mother can form antibodies if exposed to the Rh (D) positive blood of her baby, ACOG recommends antepartum RhIG prophylaxis either at 28 weeks or within 72 hours of delivery for Rh (D) negative mothers who deliver an Rh (D) positive baby. Since these weak D patients were previously typed as Rh (D) positive, they did not receive rhogam. These same patients will now be typed as Rh (D) negative.

Consistency in reporting with our partners at the Puget Sound Blood Center will reduce confusion when samples are tested between laboratories. As a result of this policy change we anticipate that there will be discrepancies in some patients past and current Rh blood type. These potentially confusing situations should be uncommon as weak D individuals are less than 1% of the population. Please contact the laboratory with any concerns regarding obstetrical patients or potential transfusion patients.

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