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Memorandum

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TO: Rhode Island Hospital, The Miriam Hospital, and Newport Hospital Medical Staff, House Staff Officers, Nursing Managers and Lifespan Outreach Clients

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DATE: June 9, 2023

SUBJECT: **Discontinuation of Babesia Antibody Test Order with Appropriate Replacement Test and Optimal Endemic Tick-Borne Disease Screening Tests**

Effective June 19, 2023, Babesia antibody testing will not be available for ordering.

The preferred testing for diagnosis of Babesiosis is peripheral blood smear (thin and thick smear) examined by light microscopy (order code BPARS, performed in-house); serial specimens may be required for diagnosis since the burden of the parasite can be low.

A PCR test can be ordered for patient with very low parasitemia if blood smears are negative and clinical suspicion of Babesiosis is high.

ALL orders submitted for Babesia antibody will be diverted to blood parasite peripheral blood screen (BPARS).

ALL orders submitted for Anaplasma/Ehrlichia antibodies will be diverted to PCR test.

Serology (antibody) test is not recommended for the diagnosis of Babesiosis and Anaplasma/Ehrlichia. Since the antibody level can be very low at the early stage of the disease, serology testing can give a false negative result; and if the patient had been previously infected with Babesia, the antibody can last for 10-12 months, this can give a false positive result.

Here is a link for an educational video for the laboratory diagnosis of Babesiosis.
https://intranet.lifespan.org/sites/default/files/2022-2/babesiosis_educational_video.mp4

We would also take the opportunity to re-emphasize the optimal set of tests for initial screening for acute presentation of endemic tick-borne diseases, as per evidence-based recommendations from CDC.

Babesia – blood parasite peripheral blood screen (BPARS); if negative and clinical suspicion high either serial repeat peripheral blood smear parasite screen or Babesia PCR

Anaplasma/Ehrlichia – PCR test; peripheral blood lavender top tube; result estimated 1-3 days.

Lyme disease (Borelli asp.) – Total antibody screen (IgG&IgM) with automatic reflex to Western Blot

For questions, Please do not hesitate to contact Microbiology laboratory: Dr. Tao Hong (401-444-3144) or Dr. Sara Geffert (401-444-4421) Send out laboratory: Carole J Kavanagh (401-793-2711).