ST. Joseph's/Candler
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October 7, 2026

For Immediate Release:

To All Medical Staff

RE: Nation-wide Disruption of Microbiology Media

The purpose of this communication is to provide attention to a serious supply issue regarding routine bacteriology cultures. This issue has affected all media manufacturers worldwide and is expected to result in limited to no supply until November. The ongoing worldwide shortage is due to limited availability of sheep blood, a key component used in one of our primary plated media. As a result, the request for routine bacteriology cultures needs to be limited as much as possible.
To ensure this product is available for critical applications the following will be implemented:

1. Outpatient urines submitted for a Urinalysis and Urine Culture separately will be ordered as a UAREFLEXUC. This will eliminate the culturing of suboptimal/contaminated specimens and screen-negative UA's. Please note interfaced orders will be changed to the UAREFLEXUC.

2. For cultures reported as multiple colony types, there will no longer be an option of requesting workups. (This is standard guidelines from the American Society of Microbiology.)

3. Physicians should limit the number of cultures submitted on the same patient – i.e. left finger superficial, left finger deep, etc. Individual swab collections with similar sources will be combined and processed as a single culture.

With depletion of media, culture results will require disclaimers.

PLEASE NOTE: Reference laboratories are also affected.

For any further questions or concerns, please contact the laboratory at 912-819-2874.

Sincerely,

Keith A. Stevens MD 10/7/26

Keith A. Stevens, MD

Medical Director, Laboratory Services

St. Joseph's/Candler

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