



# Messenger

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## **New Test for Coronavirus SARS-CoV-2 at SLO Public Health Laboratory**

The County of San Luis Obispo Public Health Laboratory will soon initiate testing for the SARS-CoV-2 virus using Transcription Mediated Amplification (TMA), a proprietary molecular amplification technology developed by Hologic, Inc.

The test, named Coronavirus SARS-CoV-2 amplification (test # 6860), will become the principal method for testing for COVID-19 at the SLO Public Health Laboratory, using the automated instrument called the Panther. Test orders marked "COVID 19" or "SARS CoV-2" will be assigned this new test number starting Monday, June 15, 2020.

VTM and saline specimens may continue to be submitted for this test, as with previous tests. The Hologic Aptima technology also accommodates nasal mid-turbinate swabs using the Aptima Multi-test swab collector. See full specimen collection instructions at [www.slocounty.ca.gov/Corona-sars-Cov2-PCR](http://www.slocounty.ca.gov/Corona-sars-Cov2-PCR).

Test orders marked "STAT" for Coronavirus SARS-CoV-2 will be assigned the Coronavirus SARS-CoV-2 Xpert PCR (test #6852) and the test will be performed on the Gene Xpert platform (from Cepheid, Inc.) with results reported the same day.

The mainstream CDC-developed Coronavirus SARS-CoV-2 PCR test (test #6850) will be reserved for testing of inconclusive specimens, including those referred to the SLO Public Health Laboratory from local hospitals and other clinical reference laboratories. The requisition should be marked "inconclusive results by PCR."

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## **Update: Testing Fees for Coronavirus SARS-CoV-2**

**Coronavirus SARS-CoV-2 testing fees, when applicable, will begin with specimens received starting Friday, August 7, 2020.**

There will continue to be no charge for patients who lack the ability to pay for the test, and no charge for testing of specimens solicited by the County of San Luis Obispo Public Health Department staff, including outbreak investigation and other epidemiologic inquiries.

A charge will be applied where specimens are submitted for Coronavirus detection in all other cases. The charges will be:

#6860 Coronavirus SARS-CoV-2 amplification: \$63  
#6852 Coronavirus SARS-CoV-2 Xpert PCR: \$94  
#6850 Coronavirus SARS-CoV-2 PCR: \$138

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## Testing Alert: HHS Guidance Against Use of MTM on Hologic or DiaSorin Systems

Earlier this week, an incident with PrimeStore MTM put staff at risk in a clinical lab. As was previously communicated in [HHS guidance](#), MTM contains guanidine thiocyanate (GITC), and will produce **cyanide gas** when mixed with bleach. Both the Hologic Panther and DiaSorin Simplexa instruments use bleach to disinfect their systems. Specimens transported in MTM should not be tested on either Hologic or DiaSorin systems.

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### Questions?

Please contact the Laboratory Director at 805-781-5512 or [jbeebe@co.slo.ca.us](mailto:jbeebe@co.slo.ca.us).

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