May 24, 2010

To: Chiefs of Service, Attending Physicians, Housestaff, Nurses and Other Concerned Personnel

From: Barbara Haller, MD, PhD
Division Chief, Microbiology

Eberhard Fiebig, MD
Laboratory Director

Re: Bacterial Antigen Test on Body Fluids (including CSF) no longer offered at SFGH Clinical Laboratory

Effective June 1, 2010, the Bacterial Antigen Test on Body Fluids (including CSF), listed as Antigen Detection in Body Fluids in the on-line SFGH Clinical Lab Manual, will no longer be performed by the SFGH Clinical Laboratory.

Studies have demonstrated the lack of sensitivity and specificity of this assay for detection of Streptococcus pneumoniae, Group B Streptococcus, Haemophilus influenzae, E. coli K1 and Neisseria meningitidis serogroups. Additionally, it has been shown that bacterial antigen testing on CSF has no demonstrable clinical impact, and that inaccurate results can lead to costly interventions. Use of gram stain and bacterial culture is recommended for identification of bacterial pathogens.

Please contact Dr. Barbara Haller (206-3595) or Dr. Patricia Nassos (206-8578) with any questions or concerns.