Starting December 19, 2011, the SFGH Clinical Laboratory will resume offering a Rapid Group A Strep test for throat specimens. Testing was interrupted on September 28, 2011 when the test kit in use was abruptly pulled from the market due to concerns about an elevated incidence of false positive results. Performance of a new test kit (BD Chek™ Group A Strep) has been verified by the SFGH Clinical Laboratory. In a limited study (n=68), the BD Chek™ Group A Strep assay of throat cultures demonstrated 70% sensitivity and 98% specificity compared to culture.

Please note the following:

1) A throat specimen for rapid testing should be collected using a red-top double swab, as before. If the Rapid Group A Strep test is negative, the second swab will be used to culture for Group A Strep.

2) A major change in sample stability with the new assay: Specimens must be received in the laboratory within 8 hours of collection to be tested with the new rapid test kit (specimens were stable for 24 hours with previous Rapid Group A Strep assay).

3) Results will be reported within 1 hour after specimen receipt in the laboratory.

For questions or concerns, please contact Dr. Barbara Haller (206-3595) or Patricia Nassos, PhD (206-8578).