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Guidance for Universal Testing for COVID-19 of Pregnant Women Admitted for Delivery

Background: The obstetric population poses a unique challenge in the era of COVID-19, as they have multiple interactions with the health care system with nearly all admitted to the hospital for delivery. If infected, most patients are not likely to suffer severe consequences; however, health care personnel are vulnerable to infection. A delivery routinely has multiple groups of providers, and the potential for emergency surgery and intubation is present. Reports of presymptomatic transmission and an April 13, 2020 report in the *New England Journal of Medicine* that identified an asymptomatic SARS-CoV-2 positive rate of 13.5% in patients admitted to labor and delivery highlight this concern. This document provides guidance for development and implementation of a universal testing strategy for pregnant patients admitted to Labor and Delivery.

Recommendations for Universal COVID-19 Testing on Labor and Delivery:

COVID-19 RT-PCR testing (also called molecular testing or NAAT) is recommended for any obstetric patient at risk for a surgical procedure and possible intubation. Where resources and capacity exist, perform preoperative COVID-19 testing within 48 hours of scheduled induction of labor or cesarean section upon admission for augmentation or induction of labor, external cephalic versions, or conditions in which delivery is probable. Where possible, perform COVID-19 rapid testing upon admission to labor and delivery for active labor. These recommendations are for all the above patients, regardless of presence or absence of symptoms typical of COVID-19. Please note that serologic or antibody testing is **not** appropriate in this situation, as it will not reliably indicate if a patient is currently infected.

ADH has the capacity to provide limited support for testing in this clinical setting. Labor and Delivery providers lacking adequate testing capacity should contact ADH for possible testing through the ADH Public Health Laboratory. For this or other questions regarding this document, they can contact the ADH COVID-19 Physicians' Call Line at 1-844-930-3023.

References:

<https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/69/wr/pdfs/mm6914e1-H.pdf>

<https://www.nejm.org/doi/full/10.1056/NEJMc2009316>

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