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PUBLIC HEALTH ADVISORY

To: All Health Care
From: Dr. Siiri Bennett, State Epidemiologist
Subject: **Changes to HETL COVID-19 Testing Operational Schedule**
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Changes to HETL COVID-19 Testing Operational Schedule

On Monday, June 28, 2021, the hours of operation for the clinical microbiology section at the Maine CDC Health and Environmental Testing Laboratory (HETL) will shift to 7 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday through Friday. As a result, HETL will not conduct COVID-19 PCR testing on Saturday or Sunday.

Submitters should be aware that samples are only viable for testing within 72 hours after collection. Samples beyond that 72-hour window cannot be tested. Before 5 p.m. on Friday, HETL staff will freeze any sample that would expire because it is more than 72 hours post collection. HETL staff will then test that sample during the next business period. If HETL is not able to verify that an unfrozen sample was collected within 72 hours, the sample will not be tested.

Facilities should plan to deliver COVID-19 samples before 5 p.m. on Friday. Samples delivered after 5 p.m. on Friday may exceed the 72-hour period of viability prior to Monday. Samples received on Saturday or Sunday will be processed during the next business period, provided that the sample has not exceeded the 72-hour period of viability.