**To:** All DH Providers

**From:** Mark A. Cervinski, PhD, DABCC, Director of Chemistry and Point-of-Care Testing

Jose R. Mercado, MD, Regional Medical Director of Inpatient Quality, Dartmouth Health

**Date:** 10/06/2025

**Re:** Automated Lactate Reflex for Sepsis Order Set

**Situation**: Beginning Saturday, October 4, 2025, an update has been implemented for all whole blood and plasma lactate orders placed as part of sepsis order sets. The updated lactate test order will include the question, “Should a reflex repeat be performed if abnormal”. If ordered as part of a sepsis order set, the default answer will be set as “Yes”.

**Background:** Elevated whole blood or plasma lactate concentrations can be associated with sepsis. Selecting “Yes” to this question will automatically place an additional lactate order to be collected 3 hours following the initial, should the initial lactate concentration be greater than or equal to 2.0 mmol/L. The initial and reflex lactate measurement of samples collected at DHMC in Lebanon will be performed on whole blood via a blood gas instrument. At all other DH locations, the initial and reflex lactate measurements will occur on plasma samples at the individual laboratory locations.

**Assessment:** The availability of an automated reflex for lactate measurement will improve compliance with sepsis screening protocols. The reflex option will also reduce the number of timed orders needing to be placed by the ordering provider.

**Recommendation:** All providers screening for sepsis are encouraged to use the default answer of “Yes” to the question, “Should a reflex repeat be performed if abnormal?”. If the lactate measurement is not ordered as part of a sepsis order set, the provider can indicate “Yes” or “No” to indicate their desire for reflex lactate measurement.

**For questions or additional information, please contact:**

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