



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts  
Executive Office of Health and Human Services  
Department of Public Health  
William A. Hinton State Laboratory Institute  
305 South Street, Jamaica Plain, MA 02130

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**To:** Providers submitting swabs for *Haemophilus ducreyi* (chancroid) Gram stains

**From:** Linda Han, MD, MPH, Director, Division of Microbiology  
Katherine Hsu, MD, MPH, Medical Director, Division of STD Prevention & HIV/AIDS Surveillance

**Date:** February 23, 2009

**RE:** *Haemophilus ducreyi* (chancroid) Gram stains to be discontinued at the State Laboratory

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Effective March 15, 2009, the MA Department of Public Health State Laboratory Institute (SLI) will no longer be offering *Haemophilus ducreyi* Gram stains in support of the diagnosis of chancroid.

A ***probable diagnosis*** of chancroid, for both clinical and surveillance purposes, can be made if all of the following criteria are met: 1) the patient has one or more painful genital ulcers; 2) the patient has no evidence of syphilis infection by darkfield examination of ulcer exudate or by a serologic test for syphilis performed at least 7 days after onset of ulcers; 3) the clinical presentation, appearance of genital ulcers and, if present, regional lymphadenopathy are typical for chancroid; and 4) a test for HSV performed on the ulcer exudate is negative.

A ***definitive diagnosis*** of chancroid requires the identification of *H. ducreyi* on special culture media. This test, which is available from commercial sources, has a sensitivity of <80%. More sensitive PCR tests for *H. ducreyi* have been developed, but none have yet been approved for use by the FDA.

The MA Division of STD Prevention (617-983-6940) will continue to be available for consultation in the diagnosis and management of suspected cases of chancroid.