



May, 2009

## TECHNICAL BULLETIN

### HIV VIRAL LOAD BY REAL TIME RT-PCR

Starting June 1<sup>st</sup>, 2009, AMA Laboratory will be changing its method for HIV-1 viral quantitation from the current Siemens Versant B-DNA method to the Roche COBAS AmpliPrep/Taqman HIV-1 Test. This test is based on the real time RT-PCR platform.

Several improvements are accomplished by this change: 1. Increased sensitivity (down to 48 copies/mL); 2. Extended linear range (48 copies/mL -10 million copies/mL); 3. Faster turn-around time (no overnight incubation).

Of note, there will be no need to re-baseline your patients since several studies have shown that the Roche COBAS Ampliprep/Taqman HIV-1 Test has excellent correlation with other HIV viral quantitation methods, including other real time RT-PCR and the B-DNA methods. In addition, COBAS Ampliprep/Taqman HIV-1 Test still has coverage for the Group M subtype, including the rare non-B subtypes.

The specimen requirements are as follows: 3 mL plasma collected in lavender top tube (EDTA) only. Separate the plasma from whole blood within 6 hours of collection by centrifugation at room temperature. Transfer the plasma into a polypropylene tube and store in refrigerator for later pick up. Do not freeze.

With this new method, AMA Laboratory can provide you standard of care sensitivity (50 copies/mL) and faster viral load test turn-around time.

Please contact us if you have any questions.