

UNCLASSIFIED 16 STATE 93130

AUG 19, 2016

SUBJECT: New Gonorrhea Testing Requirements for Visa Applicants

1. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has updated its Technical Instructions for Gonorrhea for Panel

Physicians: <http://www.cdc.gov/immigrantrefugeehealth/exams/ti/panel/technical-instructions/panel-physicians/gonorrhea.html>. Panel physicians worldwide are required to implement the updated technical instructions (TIs) no later than October 1, 2016. Posts should work with their panel physicians to ensure that they are ready to implement these changes by the deadline.

2. Per CDC's new technical instructions, all visa applicants undergoing a medical exam, 15 years of age or older are required to be tested for gonorrhea. Applicants younger than 15 must be tested if there is a history of gonorrhea or reason to suspect gonorrhea infection. Gonorrhea has long been an inadmissible condition under INA 212(a)(1)(a)(i), but panel physicians previously only tested applicants who were symptomatic. Most cases of gonorrhea infection are asymptomatic, and therefore CDC is now requiring active screening.

3. VO strongly reiterates CDC's recommendation for panel physicians to use the least invasive test for screening as possible. The TIs recommend that panel physicians use a nucleic acid amplification test (NAAT) which may be performed on urine specimens or the self-collected vaginal swab for women. If those tests are unavailable, CDC's TIs require endocervical or vaginal swabs for women and urethral swabs for men.

4. VO has updated the panel physician agreement template in 9 FAM 302.2 to reflect the new requirements. Posts should work with panel physicians to determine the cost of the additional testing and reflect the new cost using the revised panel physician agreement no later than October 1, 2016. The base medical exam fee for applicants 15 and older may be increased to include the additional test. In some cases, panel physicians will require new lab equipment to process these samples, and the cost of machinery can be taken into account. Such costs should be spread out as much as possible (e.g., over the course of the first year) so as not to overburden applicants.

5. Posts may use the following language to respond to inquiries from visa applicants and other interested parties:

Gonorrhea is a communicable disease of public health significance and applicants with gonorrhea are ineligible for a visa to the United States under Section 212(a)(1)(A)(i) of the Immigration and Nationality Act. CDC has regulatory authority over the specific guidelines of the medical examination required of visa applicants and technical instructions for panel physicians. CDC's Technical Instructions for Gonorrhea for Panel Physicians may be accessed at <http://www.cdc.gov/immigrantrefugeehealth/exams/ti/panel/technical-instructions/panel-physicians/gonorrhea.html>. Any questions or concerns should be addressed to CDC.

UNCLASSIFIED 16 STATE 93130