

## **COVID Antibody Testing At VMG**

**As of May 20, 2020**

*Developed by Carol Connolly RPA-C, Approved by Dr. Steven Esrick*

**What is the test:** The test involves obtaining a blood sample to check for the presence of antibodies to coronavirus. Antibodies are molecules produced by the body's immune system to help fight infection. Specifically, the test offered by VMG looks for the presence of (IgG) antibodies that are produced approximately 14 days after symptom onset and indicate that the body has mounted an immune response and is past the acute phase of the disease.

Patients should know that the presence of antibodies does NOT mean that they are immune to coronavirus and is no guarantee against re-infection.

Scientists are still working to develop a test to identify "neutralizing antibodies" which, if found in sufficient quantity, may indicate that a person has some protection against reinfection, but this test is not yet available.

The cost of this testing is approximately \$90 and we cannot guarantee that it will be covered by insurance (patients should check with their insurance).

Patients should know that, given the relatively low prevalence of COVID in the general population of Hampshire and Franklin Counties in comparison to other places in Massachusetts, there is an increased likelihood that a positive antibody test is a false positive rather than a true positive.

### **Appropriate candidates for antibody testing:**

Patients who tested positive for COVID 19 and recovered and who want to donate plasma to help treat patients with active COVID 19.

Patients who had classic symptoms of coronavirus but who were not tested or tested negative for COVID 19 during their illness and who have a clinically relevant reason to be tested (i.e., the test result will change how their provider is treating their condition).

### **Who should NOT be tested:**

Patients who are seeking to know whether or not they have an ACTIVE coronavirus infection.

Patients who had mild symptoms or who had symptoms in December 2019 or earlier and so are unlikely to have been infected with coronavirus.

Patients who had classic coronavirus symptoms, but are LESS THAN 4 weeks from the onset of their symptoms. Antibodies may not be detected if the patient is tested too soon after infection.