Banner Health

Expanded Valley Fever (Coccidioidomycosis) Testing in BUC Environment	
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Date: 12/18/25	Version Number: 3

1. Background

Valley Fever (coccidioidomycosis) is an invasive fungal infection caused by Coccidioides species, endemic in the Southwestern U.S., including Arizona. It often presents as community-acquired pneumonia (CAP) and cannot be reliably distinguished from other respiratory illnesses by symptoms alone. Misdiagnosis and inappropriate antibiotic use are common.

2. Key Changes

Expanded Testing Availability: Valley Fever testing is now approved and available within the BUC environment.

When to Consider Testing:

- Patients presenting with **CAP or erythema nodosum** who live in an endemic area (e.g., Arizona desert regions, San Joaquin Valley, CA) are *required* to be tested for cocci per **BUCS Valley Fever Protocol.**
- Patients presenting with **CAP or erythema nodosum** who have visited/traveled through an endemic area (e.g., Arizona desert regions, San Joaquin Valley, CA) in the past 30 days are *required* to be tested for cocci per **BUCS Valley Fever Protocol.**
- Patients with **respiratory symptoms where a chest x-ray is considered** or needed should be offered cocci testing.
- Patients with prolonged symptoms such as fever, fatigue, arthralgia, or **respiratory symptoms not improving after empiric antibiotics** should be offered cocci testing.
- If no recent exposure to endemic regions, **CAP** and **E. nodosum** patients should still also be offered cocci testing.

3. Recommended Tests

- **Serology (Coccidioides Screen (IgM and IgG antibodies) with flex to CF Titer when indicated (RL) CPT 1061)** – Primary Diagnostic Tool.

4. Provider Action

- Incorporate Valley Fever testing into differential diagnosis for CAP and E. nodosum in endemic regions.
- Document travel history and exposure risk.
- Educate patients on Valley Fever and prevention strategies (avoid dust exposure, especially during windy conditions). Educational handout available in Cerner "BH What to Know About Valley Fever 2024 (CUSTOM)"

5. Resources:

- [CDC Testing Algorithm for Coccidioidomycosis](#)
- [Valley Fever FAQs for Clinicians](#)
- [Valley Fever Clinical Practice Toolbox](#)