## Clostridium difficile Testing Algorithm Place in Contact Has patient had diarrhea, i.e. $\geq 3$ loose stools **DO NOT** Precautions until C. per day for 1-2 days (defined by taking shape **YES** TEST difficile can be ruled out. of specimen container)?<sup>1,2</sup> Does the patient have other signs or symptoms Has patient taken laxatives in consistent with C. difficile infection (e.g. abdominal NO last 24 to 48 hours? OR is discomfort, fever, elevated WBC)?2 patient on tube feedings or other nutritional NO YĖS supplements?3-4 Does the patient have risk C. difficile PCR assay recommended. factors for C. difficile Send one stool sample to lab. Multiple YĖS infection?2, 5-10 samples should not be sent. Hold laxatives, medications, and --Recent hospitalization --Recent antibiotic exposure other interventions for 24 hours Continue contact precautions and await and reassess prior to testing for --Recent intraabdominal results of assay test. C. difficile. DO NOT send surgery specimen at this time. -- Age > 60 years If positive for one or more risk factors, order C. difficile PCR assay test; continue Does patient continue to have YES loose stools after 24 hours of with contact precautions. withholding medications and other interventions? NO DO NOT Is patient positive for *C. difficile* toxin? **TEST** YĖS ΝÖ Continue contact pecautions until patient is Consider alternative causes. 11 asymptomatic or as facility policy dictates Infection Control Team to remove and treat as recommended:2,15 patient from contact precautions when --Consider de-escalation of concurrent infectious disease processes ruled out. antibiotic use. -- Do not treat asymptomatic bacteriuria. --Discontinue acid suppression if possible. Avoid ordering multiple enzyme immunoassay or --Discontinue stool softeners and/or polymerase chain reaction (PCR) tests to laxatives. diagnose C. difficile disease as many studies -- Avoid use of anti-peristaltic agents. demonstrate that testing multiple stool specimens --Consider early surgical consultation for is ineffective for the diagnosis of C. difficile patients with severe disease. disease. Only one test should be ordered to rule in or out C. difficile as the ratio of true-positive results to false-positive results becomes Follow-up stool testing for test of cure is NOT unfavorable.12-14 recommended after treatment of C. difficile disease.<sup>2,4</sup> Kentucky Public Health Prevent, Promote, Protect

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