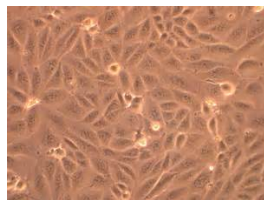


Key Figures from
30 Years of Virology
Cell Culture Service



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It is with great sadness, yet anticipation, that GML says goodbye to our viral cell culture operations. Over the last decade, onsite molecular testing replaced most of the viral culture test menu. A few situations still require viral culture, and if needed, specimens will be routed to GMC and then to GMC Referred Testing Section team, who will forward specimens offsite to a leading reference laboratory, Quest Diagnostics (See Table 1).

Table 1: Referral Testing Codes for Viral Culture Requests

Old GMC Code	is replaced by ...	Referred Test Code as of 8/5/14
Herpes Simplex Virus: HSVVC		HSVJWT
CMV: CMVVC		CMVCUL
Enterovirus: EVVC		ENVC
Varicella Zoster: VZVVC		MISC1; temporary code

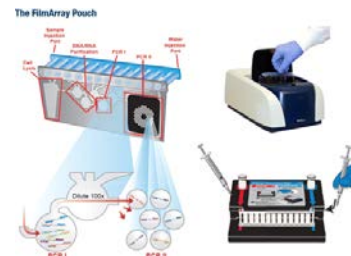
The history of the Virology laboratory began in 1982 when Dr. Christine Smull selected a team of young medical technologists to create GMC's first Virology laboratory. Many of the current Microbiology leadership team and medical technologists grew up in, and grew to love the Virology laboratory and all the people in it. *Donna Wolk**, now one of the doctoral directors in Microbiology, was trained at the Centers for Disease Control in 1983 and worked closely with *Fran Tomashefski**, now a technical specialist, to integrate the CDC methods and open the Virology laboratory at GMC. The early 1980s Virology team includes *Angela Solenberger** and *Grace Notaro**, Microbiologists; and *Barbara Heiter**, Med Tech II. In the late 80s others joined and included *Lisa Scicchitano** and *Patti Fidelman*, and *Julie Riley** Technical specialists, *Anne Reichart**, Micro. Supervisor; *Mindy Leberfingher**, *Cindy Hall**, and *Yvette Nye*, Med Tech IIs; *Steven Kreis**, *Maria Morris**, *Beth Landis***, *Beth Kline*, *Mary Ann Heller**, and *Larry Blase**, Microbiologists; *Mille Scicchitano** and *Becky Knock**, Molecular Diagnostics; *Janice Farnsworth** (ATL); *Karen Rencavage**, CPSL, and *Louise Letterman**, Finance

* MT(ASCP), board certified medical technologists; **I(ASCP) board certified Immunologist

To all of you who cut your teeth in Virology, who were part of its success story – congratulations! Abigail G. would be quite pleased with what you accomplished, amazed by your perseverance and ingenuity, and proud of the fine human beings you grew up to be. Your traditions and work ethic are among the finest examples GML laboratory scientists. Your commitment to innovation, lifelong learning, teamwork, and patient focus is exemplary. The dedication and love of the Virology Service will be long remembered and applauded as an important part of GML history.

In 1984, most viral cultures took 2-7 days to become positive, some as long as 28 days. Today, molecular viral testing is integrated into nearly every GML hospital within a small plastic pouch, with a median turnaround time of ~ 4 hours from receipt. Quite an improvement! While we will all miss the end of the virology cell culture service, we collectively hold tight to the values of innovation, quality, client service, healthcare delivery, and life-long friendships that developed during the course of its history.

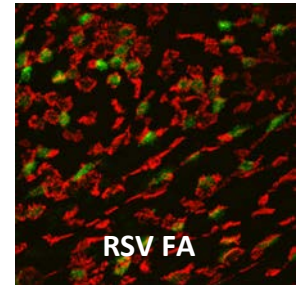
"Make it the best." - A. Geisinger



Infectious Disease Research Core

Virology Trivia

- Virology was founded in 1984 in a small 10 x 12 ft room that still housed the original 1915 windows that Abigail G. had installed there. In the summers, the heat leaked in the windows and it was cooler inside the 37°C incubator than it was in the virology laboratory. In the winters, technologists had to quickly examine the cell cultures in small batches because the cells would exhibit “cold toxicity” if left on the bench-top for more than a few minutes.
- In 1984, the state of the art testing included fluorescent antibody identification of infected human cells, which required 2 days incubation and testing (e.g. RSV FA).
- In 1984, medical technologists went to the bedside to assist with collection of nasopharyngeal aspirates, tracheal aspirates, and skin lesions. Those were the days!
- The collective Virology cell culture experience at GMC lasted 30 years in total. It was a good run!
- Dr. Wolk’s current office stands in the same place that the original Virology laboratory was located in 1984 when it was opened. Circle of life...
- Virology was the first section within GML to incorporate client services booklet and allied health education into its strategy and the first to offer specimen collection guides, specimen collection training, and a laboratory user manual.
- The Virology laboratory was moved to its current location in 1986 and was painted “Renoir Red” (it’s really light peach) in 1989, when Lisa Scicchitano was allowed to pick the wall color as reward for her recent promotion to lead technologist –Remember it was the 80’s... but yes, it still remains today, in all its peachy glory!
- In 1998, the Virology laboratory was part of the merger with Penn State Hershey; where the cultures were transitioned, then later brought back to the GMC campus before the dissolution of the merger.
- In the late 90’s the Pediatric department, led by Dr. Michael Ryan, and the Children’s Miracle network helped to expand the technical innovation by funding equipment to expand Virology services. From inception, virologists enjoyed a close relationship with pediatric physicians and residents. Thanks Peds!
- Molecular testing for respiratory viruses began in 2009 and the current Respiratory Pathogen Panel testing now takes place in what used to be a broom closet when the Virology laboratory was founded. Believe it!
- GMC Virology experienced one of their biggest challenges, the swine flu epidemic in 2009, when the workload increased with up to 700% more samples than usual. The staff refers to that time period as the “Flunami.”



If you have any questions, please contact the Doctoral Directors, Donna Wolk, Ph.D., D(ABMM) at 570-271-7467 or Raquel Martinez Ph.D., D(ABMM) at 570-214-6587. For newsletter questions, contact Christy Attinger at 570 271-6338.

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