Discussion on how to make workflow better on the weekends so work is getting completed but staff does not have to stay past 3

Laura S put together a list of the duties that are performed on the weekends:

1. Rounds
2. Daily start-up
3. Daily QC
4. Finish old cultures (includes any Vitek or KB or testing)
5. Start new cultures (includes any Vitek or KB of testing)
6. Medipatient and accession referred in samples
7. Accession inpatient samples
8. Plant samples
9. Stain gram stains
10. Read gram stains
11. On Saturday, sub out S.pneumo and both H.influenzae from beads
12. On Sunday, do second sub of S.pneumo and H.influenzae
13. On Sunday, sub daily QC plates from slants
14. First Saturday of month, sub out daily QC organisms from beads
15. First Sunday of month, sub out QC organisms to slants and plates for the week
16. The following items were added by the microbiology staff:
* Endotoxin testing, often on Saturday
* Scanning the requisitions
* Phone calls

Everyone had a turn to offer suggestions and comments on the weekend work:

1. Moses: We spend time on doing morning collections but he doesn’t want to stop. Micro is the backbone of the weekend collections as two of us go and only one core lab tech can go. If we could have an MLA on the weekends, one micro tech could go and do collections and the other could stay in the lab and doing daily start up and daily QC. Also, clients don’t realize when we are done for the day (3:00) and send samples down late. If get a significant sample (body fluid) we would have to stay as this cannot wait until the next day. Jennifer said that if this occurs, we are to call the PCC and ask for over time to be approved. This is acceptable for situations where we need to stay late to process significant specimens.
2. David: Feels we need to reduce time spent on collections.
3. Solomon: Workload is difficult to predict. Saturdays are usually difficult but Sunday’s are better.
4. Veronica: There are no rejection criteria for swabs. There is a job aid that has urines, sputum and stool but not swabs. This makes it more time consuming to order samples.
5. April: YPCC and Frame Lake referred in samples do not have to be processed. Sort specimens into racks and check collection dates. If specimens are going to time out then process them. If not, they can wait. Ensure you are batch reporting to save time.
6. Other points brought up:
* Phone calls take significant amount of time. Sometimes when we have to phone critical results, no one answers. Also a lot of phone calls about water samples.
* We need to work as a team on the weekend and communicate with each other.
* We can help out each other with work. Urine bench can help out with wound bench duties and vice versa.

In conclusion:

1. Jennifer stressed that we cannot stay late without getting paid. This is a safety concern as if anything happened while you are at work when your shift is over you will not be entitled to compensation. Also, we shouldn’t have to be putting in our own time to finish the work.
2. We are going to move the subbing of the QC organisms to Monday. It will be performed by the 9-5 specimen processing bench (MLA or Tech). Then the weekly QC will be performed on Wednesday by the 9-5 technologist. We will trial this for 6 months and will start next week. Laura will work on a procedure for subbing out the QC organisms for this purpose.
3. We do not need to worry about scanning requisitions on the weekend. It can be done on Monday.
4. Jennifer will follow up with dialysis to ensure we do not receive endotoxin samples on the weekends.
5. All inpatient specimens need to be planted on Saturday and Sunday. This is important. However, samples from YPCC and Frame Lake that we usually have on Sundays can be prioritized. Samples that are timing out need to be ordered and planted but other specimens can wait until Monday as Monday’s are usually quiet on the specimen receiving bench.
6. We will start analyzing our work around 10, including in patient specimens to be ordered and planted. If we feel like we will not be able to perform all the work by 3, we are to call the supervisor and ask if an MLA can be called in. When they are called in, they are paid for 4 hours of work so we don’t want to leave it till the end of the day.
7. Jennifer will look at having an MLA work weekends but this is not something that can be done right away. For the time being, we need to carry on without an MLA and try to prioritize our day to ensure we are finished at 3.
8. Jennifer is going to design a new requisition for waters. This will ensure that they are filled out correctly and might reduce the time we spend on troubleshooting water samples.
9. Laura is going to add swabs to the rejection criteria job aid.