

Information for Healthcare Professionals

I. Background

Why are pharmacists allowed to order laboratory tests?

Pharmacists participate at all points of the health system and work collaboratively to ensure safe and effective drug therapy. Laboratory data is one part of the data that pharmacists may consider in determining the safety and efficacy of treatment regimens.

Laboratory test data may be used by pharmacists in the following situations:

- Ensuring medications and doses ordered are appropriate for the individual patient
- Monitoring patients' response to therapy to ensure optimal outcomes
- Monitoring for adverse effects to ensure patients' safety
- Screening for untreated health conditions in patients with other medical conditions (eg. screening for dyslipidemia in a diabetic patient)

II. Ordering Laboratory Tests

What laboratory tests can pharmacists order?

All, with the exception of Calgary Zone inpatient, pharmacists will have the ability to order any laboratory test, provided it is relevant and the pharmacist is competent with ordering and interpreting it.

Calgary Zone inpatient pharmacists (SCM and Calgary Laboratory Services - CLS)

In Calgary, inpatient pharmacists will only have access to the common laboratory order set and will be able to order drug levels through the Therapeutic Drug Monitoring (TDM) order set in Sunrise Clinical Manager (SCM). The pharmacist will be identified as the prescriber in SCM and will be assuming the responsibility of following up and acting on this test result. The pharmacist will also be responsible to document in the health record how this result will be dealt with if the pharmacist is not present to deal with it themselves. When ordering a test outside this order set, the test will need to be ordered on behalf of the Most Responsible Practitioner (MRP); in most cases this is the physician.

Can pharmacists order tests on any patient?

All pharmacists may order laboratory tests provided they have completed a thorough patient assessment, have identified an unmet laboratory monitoring need, and have a documented plan for follow-up on results. It is expected that pharmacists will ensure that the result they are looking for is not already available through existing sources. **As well, it is expected that pharmacists will only order laboratory tests within their personal competency profile.**

How may laboratory tests be ordered by pharmacists?

Laboratory tests may be ordered by pharmacists in two ways:

1. Independently, under the pharmacist's own PRAC ID
2. In conjunction with other members of the health care team as part of a collaborative practice environment

III. Follow Up Arrangements

What will the process for ordering laboratory tests within Alberta Health Services look like in general?

Inpatient pharmacists

Pharmacists with PRAC IDs will register as practitioners with their designated lab. Registration processes will vary depending on the laboratory in question. Inpatient pharmacists will not need to provide individual contact information to the laboratory as all test results (critical or not) are phoned or faxed to the patient's care unit or will be available in the electronic health record. In North, Central, Edmonton, and South Zones, the MRP will remain the provider of record for all laboratory tests ordered.

Paper or electronic laboratory requisitions will be completed as per the unit or program protocol (may be done by a designate such as the unit clerk or by the practitioner). Since the unit will be contacted with all critical test results, the pharmacists ordering laboratory tests **MUST** have established clear communication protocols with their unit or care area so they can be contacted immediately if critical test results are phoned to the unit. If the pharmacist will not be available to directly receive and take action on the test result, the pharmacist must have a well-communicated and documented plan in place for this follow-up.

For non-critical test results, pharmacists who ordered the test(s) are responsible to follow up on the result via Netcare, with the unit and/or patient chart or in SCM in Calgary.

Outpatient/Ambulatory pharmacists

Pharmacists with PRAC IDs will need to register as practitioners with their designated community laboratories and provide contact fax numbers or to where all results can be sent in addition to a 24 hour contact numbers for critical test results. Many clinics have chosen to establish call groups that receive notification of all critical results after hours.

The pharmacist must then complete the appropriate manual laboratory requisitions for the patient(s) they are ordering the laboratory test for and clearly mark all required tests they wish to order. The completed form is then given to the patient to take to the most convenient outpatient or community laboratory for collection.

Laboratory results may be reported via electronic methods, fax or phone (for critical results) depending on the lab, however, all results will be available in Netcare for pharmacist review.

Prepared 2012 April 30; revised 2013 Jan 14