

Date: December 6, 2016
To: South Zone West Physicians
From: AHS Laboratory Services
Re: **REVISED** LABORATORY TESTS AND ASSOCIATED COSTS

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Key Messages:

- An important driver of laboratory costs is test ordering practices. Although the unit cost of many routine tests has decreased over the years mainly due to improved technology, utilization has also increased significantly. While utilization of laboratory tests is a complex issue being aware of the cost of tests is potentially useful. This may help in the ordering of appropriate tests during annual physical examinations and may also help clinicians to be more selective when deciding which test(s) to request.
- The cost of selected tests listed in this bulletin represent a median cost per test for tests performed across different laboratories in Canada. Determining the actual cost of a test is potentially difficult as there are many variables including wages, cost of reagents and supplies, cost and depreciation of equipment and service contracts. The test costs listed are a guide only ie. for awareness, may vary depending on where the test is performed eg. site, zone and should not be used to develop business cases.

Why this is important:

- Appropriate and selective tests based on specific clinical findings can help improve laboratory utilization.

Action Required:

- Being aware of test costs can result in more selective ordering practices.

Inquiries and feedback may be directed to:

- Dr. Michael Greeff at michael.greeff@ahs.ca or 403-388-6158

This bulletin has been reviewed and approved by:

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Dorothy Ward, South Zone Laboratory Director

References:

Dr. C. Naugler, Laboratory Utilization Office, Calgary Laboratory Services
AHS Laboratory Services, Edmonton

Please Turn Over

Table 1. Top diagnostic tests ordered at 6 Canadian Laboratories

Test Name	Reference Median Cost (CAD\$) ^a
Complete Blood Count	7
Creatinine	5
ALT	5
Thyroid Stimulating Hormone	5
Urinalysis with Microscopic	10
Hemoglobin A1c	7
LDL Cholesterol	15
Ferritin	8
Alkaline Phosphatase	5
Prothrombin Time (INR)	8
Albumin	5
GGT	5
Glucose Random	5
Glucose Fasting	5
Calcium	5
Blood scan with Morphology	10
Urine Culture	15
Urea	5
Magnesium	5
Iron and TIBC	5
Chlamydia/GC Test	20
Phosphate	5
Gynecology Cytology Report	30
Bilirubin Total	5
Vitamin B12	7
C-Reactive Protein	9
Electrocardiogram Lab	30
Creatine Kinase	15
Free T4	6
HIV Serology (Mixed Ag/Ab Detection)	50
Hepatitis C Antibody	10
Prostate Specific Antigen	14
Surgical Pathology Report	300
Urate	5
Lactate Dehydrogenase	5
Fecal Immunochemical Test	9
Prothrombin Time (INR) and Partial Throm	15
Bilirubin Total and Direct	10
Throat Beta Strep Test	15
Blood Culture	15
Syphilis Antibody (EIA)	30
Lipase	5
AST	5
Troponin-T	10
Microscopy for BV/Yeast	15
Albumin Random-Urine	22
ABO & Rh (Instrument)	23
Hepatitis B Surface Antigen	20
Type & Screen	23
ESR	6

Table 2. Additional diagnostic test costs

Test Name	Reference Median Cost (CAD\$) ^a
BNP	18
Drugs of Abuse Screen - Urine (RRL)	55
Drugs of Abuse Screen – Urine (Routine)	30
Comprehensive Drug Screen - Urine	170
Serum Protein Electrophoresis	14
Urine Protein Electrophoresis (24 hours/random)	30
Peripheral Blood Smear	10
Peripheral Blood Smear with Pathologist review	100
Flow Cytometry	~400
Autopsy	~3000
Frozen Section	~300
Lipid Panel	25
Testosterone	45
Estradiol	14
Liver Panel	30
PSA	14
ANA Screen	12.50
ANCA	60
Cold Agglutinin Screen	37
Tissue Transglutaminase	30.25
H. pylori Breath Test	30.75
Cryoglobulin	70
Blood Gas – Arterial	50
Blood Gas – Venous	6.20

^a - Costs presented are all inclusive **Reference Median test Costs (RMC)** from 6 Canadian diagnostic laboratories. RMC are based on accounting formulas and multiple variables that may be subject to change. RMC values are for reference purposes only and are not applicable for use in research and third party service costing. RMC should not be used for cost accounting utilization interventions/ projections. Cost methodologies may vary across provinces, Canada and within the Province of Alberta.