

Date: January 8, 2013

To: All Zones
Physicians, Nurses, Public Health, Infection Prevention & Control, Emergency Medical Services, Pharmacy Services, Respiratory Therapy, Diagnostic Imaging, Laboratory Directors and Managers

From: AHS Laboratory Services, Provincial Laboratory for Public Health (ProvLab), Calgary Laboratory Services (CLS), Canadian Blood Services (CBS), Covenant Health, DynaLIFE_{Dx}, Medicine Hat Diagnostic Laboratory (MHDL)

Re: Update to Acceptance of Laboratory Samples and Test Requests Policy

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Key Messages:

- On July 1, 2011, AHS Laboratory Services implemented the provincial Acceptance of Laboratory Samples and Test Requests policy to standardize the acceptance criteria for all sample types.
- A post implementation review of compliance with this policy indicates continued issues primarily related to the following:
 - Test requests / requisitions with incomplete/incorrect patient demographic or physician information
 - Pathology samples without relevant clinical history
 - Mislabeled, unlabeled or partially labeled samples
- A new Sample Acceptance Metric has been approved that will allow monitoring and targeted follow-up of deficiencies.
- An environmental scan showed that some requirements of the Sample Acceptance policy were not being enforced by all laboratory sites. All laboratories have reviewed the policy and will enforce it as it is written. e.g. Pathology samples arriving with no clinical history will not be reported until one has been provided.
- The laboratory relies extensively on other healthcare professionals to provide complete and accurate test requests/requisitions and/or sample labels.

Why this is important:

- Potential delays and/or quality concerns may occur as a result of time spent resolving missing information.
- To ensure patient safety and valid test results.
- Samples and test requests with a defined **major** discrepancy/deficiency in required information will be **rejected** unless there is an approved exception as defined in the policy.

Action Required:

- Review and **follow** the provincial Acceptance of Laboratory Samples and Test Requests (Appendix A) document posted at: <http://www.albertahealthservices.ca/3298.asp> .
- Ensure all samples submitted to the Laboratory meet defined criteria.

Inquiries and feedback related to the policy and/or related documents may be directed to:

- Shelley Duncan, Provincial Quality Coordinator at: Shelley.duncan@albertahealthservices.ca

This bulletin has been reviewed and approved by:

Tammy Hofer, Vice-President, AHS Laboratory Services

Dr. James Wesenberg, Provincial Medical/Scientific Director, AHS Laboratory Services