

## General FAQ

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**1. When is it appropriate for me to fill out an application for out of province funding?**

- i) The molecular diagnostic, cytogenetic or biochemical genetic test is not available in the province of Alberta **AND**
- ii) The molecular, cytogenetic or biochemical genetic confirmation of the diagnosis is required for the management of your patient or their family **AND**
- iii) All testing options available within the province of Alberta have been exhausted.

**2. How do I know what tests are available in the province?**

For molecular diagnostic tests, please refer to the Molecular Diagnostic Laboratory Test List available at [www.albertahealthservices.ca/3310.asp](http://www.albertahealthservices.ca/3310.asp)

For biochemical genetic tests available in the Calgary Biochemical Genetics Lab, please refer to the Calgary Lab Services website ([www.calgarylabservices.com](http://www.calgarylabservices.com)). For enzyme assays or tests not listed, please call 403.955.7380 to enquire.

For biochemical genetic tests available in the Edmonton Biochemical Genetics Lab, please call 780.407.7907.

For cytogenetic tests, please refer to the requisitions available at [www.albertahealthservices.ca/3310.asp](http://www.albertahealthservices.ca/3310.asp)

**3. Why do I have to apply for funding approval for out of province genetic testing?**

Genetic Lab Services (GLS), as funded by Alberta Health Services, does not have an unlimited budget for out of province genetic tests. The Genetic Resource Centre is

committed to coordinating evidence-based access to out of province genetic testing. Our multi-disciplinary team facilitates requests for funding of genetic testing by providing education, application support, clinical review and coordinating approvals that balance patient care and financial stewardship.

#### **4. How do I apply for funding for an out of province genetic test?**

Test Request forms are available at [www.albertahealthservices.ca/3310.asp](http://www.albertahealthservices.ca/3310.asp)  
**Download the application form and fully complete every section, including the explanations for rationale. Please note that requests with incomplete sections will not be considered and will be returned to the applicant.**

Be as detailed as possible in your request. The more information you are able to provide, the easier it is for the reviewers to understand the clinical situation, rationale for the request and the potential impact of the results.

Your completed test request form can be mailed or faxed to the address / fax number on the test request form. If you are within the AHS network, your completed test request can be emailed to [GRC@albertahealthservices.ca](mailto:GRC@albertahealthservices.ca)

#### **5. There are three different test request forms. What is the difference?**

**Out of Province Familial Testing Request** – Complete this form if genetic testing in your patient's family member has identified a mutation(s) for which testing of your patient is appropriate. A copy of the family member's molecular report or the specific mutation(s) is required.

**Out of Province Low-Cost Genetic Testing Request** – Complete this form if the test you are requesting costs less than \$150 CDN.

**Out of Province Genetic Testing Request** – Complete this form if the above forms do not apply to your patient.

#### **6. What is considered urgent?**

The GRC will review applications on an urgent basis if:

1. There is an ongoing pregnancy and management may be impacted  
OR
2. A molecular diagnosis is required for treatment and / or management decisions **within 4 weeks of the application being made. Please note that the turnaround time for molecular diagnostic results from external labs take, on average, 6-8 weeks. Labs may consider performing priority testing with an associated priority surcharge in select circumstances.**

If you feel that your application is urgent for reasons not listed above, please indicate those reasons on the application. **If no explanation is provided, it will be assumed that the test request is not urgent.**

**7. *What happens when I submit my application to the Genetic Resource Centre?***

When a test request form is received, it is reviewed to ensure that all required information is provided and the test is appropriate for GRC consideration. The requested test is researched for multiple variables including availability of the testing, cost and detection rate of the test. Opinions regarding the clinical utility and validity of requests for out-of-province testing are provided by volunteer clinicians. The final decision is made based on both clinical opinion and financial stewardship in order to prioritize applications. The clinical and administrative reviewers use a process adapted from the ACCE evaluation process (Alytic validity, Clinical utility and Ethics, legal and social issues) developed by the Centre for Disease Control. A letter is then sent back to the applicant with the GRC decision.

**8. *I have submitted an application to the Genetic Resource Centre. When will I know if the test has been funded?***

The GRC makes every attempt to respond to non-urgent requests within 5-6 weeks and to urgent requests within 1-2 weeks from the time a **completed** test request form is received. Review times may be longer than expected for a number of reasons including more information requested, complex test request, volume of test requests, etc.

**9. *My request for out of province genetic testing has been approved. Now what?***

If your test request has been ranked as high priority, you will receive a letter to this effect in addition to paperwork required by the external laboratory (requisition +/- clinical information form +/- consent form). Complete the external laboratory's requisition and paperwork and fax them, along with the GRC approval letter, to the Calgary Molecular Diagnostic Lab at 403.955.7624. **The approval letter is valid for 90 days.**

If your patient does not already have DNA banked in the Calgary Molecular Diagnostic Laboratory, your patient will need to have blood drawn and banked. To do this, provide your patient with a Calgary Molecular Diagnostic Requisition (available at [www.albertahealthservices.ca/3310.asp](http://www.albertahealthservices.ca/3310.asp)). Indicate on the requisition that the blood is for a GRC send out and provide the GRC number (available on the approval letter).

Once the Calgary Molecular Diagnostic Laboratory receives all necessary and completed paperwork and a sample from the patient, the sample will be sent to the external laboratory.

**10. *Why do I have to complete an Alberta GLS requisition AND a requisition for the external lab?***

The Alberta GLS requisition ensures your patient has blood drawn and sent to the appropriate GLS Laboratory for processing.

The requisition for the external laboratory accompanies your patient's sample to the testing lab and ensures they perform the appropriate test and issue the result to the ordering health care provider. The GLS Laboratories do not have the knowledge of the patient's clinical history required to complete the external laboratory requisition. The ordering physician is therefore responsible for completing all required paperwork.

**11. *When will I receive the results of the out of province testing?***

In general, the Genetic Resource Centre selects laboratories that provide a turnaround time of no greater than 3 months wherever possible. However, this is dependent on the test requested and the laboratory performing the testing. If you have questions about the turn-around time for a particular patient, contact the referral laboratory directly.

The ordering health care provider is responsible for tracking all results. You will receive the results directly from the referral laboratory. Please do not call the Genetic Resource Centre for results.

**12. *Is the out of province result reviewed by laboratory geneticists before I receive it?***

Molecular diagnostic results are NOT reviewed by a Genetic Lab Services molecular geneticist. Any follow up suggested or requested in the result interpretation is solely the responsibility of the ordering physician.

**13. *My request was not ranked as high priority. Now what?***

If your test request has not been ranked as high priority, you may choose to appeal the decision or resubmit the request (in the cases where there is additional information available not included in the original request). To appeal or re-submit, please mail or fax a letter outlining your rationale for appeal or the additional information to the address / fax number below. If you are within the AHS network, you can email the letter to [GRC@albertahealthservices.ca](mailto:GRC@albertahealthservices.ca)

Alternatively, you can discuss private payment options with your patient.

**14. *I need to apply for multiple tests for the same patient. How do I do this?***

The Genetic Resource Centre expects that one test will be requested per application. If you wish to apply for multiple tests for the same patient, please submit a separate application for each test. This is critical for accurate processing and payment of testing.

In rare circumstances, it may be appropriate to apply for multiple tests in the same application. If this is the case, the tests must be prioritized before the application will be considered complete.