

Point-of-Care Testing Policy #1

ISSUE:

Point-of-Care Testing (POCT)

BACKGROUND:

Point-of-care testing refers to the analytical patient testing activities performed outside the physical facilities of a clinical laboratory and is often referred to as near-patient testing or bedside testing. POCT utilizes a wide variety of test kits and medical devices ranging from dipstick urinalysis and occult blood screening through robust hand-held kits to bench-mounted analyzers. Regardless of the complexity of the tools, a common feature of POCT is that operators are usually not laboratory-trained personnel. Operators without laboratory background may lack the knowledge and understanding of the principles of laboratory testing and good laboratory practices to ensure the reliability of the test results.

The purpose of this policy is to minimize the risk of unreliable test results. Benefit to the patient is based on the assumption that the accuracy and reproducibility of the POCT result is comparable to that of a licensed laboratory.

POLICY:

All POCT shall be held to the same standard as clinical laboratory testing with the aim that all testing must be safe, evidence-based, patient-centered, timely, efficient and equitable. To ensure quality management principles for the use of the diagnostic off-site/POCT, the following aspects shall be met:

- a. Training and certification of all personnel that perform POCT. There shall be centralized coordination of the POCT training program by designated, qualified personnel that also assess ongoing competence.**
- b. Evaluation and selection of instrumentation and procedures.**
- c. Establishment of quality control protocols shall include external proficiency testing participation, internal QC practices, and documentation as required by regulation. This includes two consecutive successful PT challenges/events prior to commencing testing using POCT.**
- d. Protocols for test requisitioning and result reporting, and active review of results by POCT director or designee. The report must be identified as a POCT result.**
- e. Clear, comprehensive record keeping and documentation for training, evaluation, quality assurance/control and health and safety.**

Laboratory testing performed in non-licensed settings is not approved and may be in contravention of the Medical Laboratory Licensing Act.