

Laboratory & Imaging Test Ordering, Tracking, Results Review, and Reporting Results to Patients

Policies & Procedures

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Policy:

Clinicians order laboratory and imaging tests using the appropriate ordering form (or order entry template if an EHR has order entry enabled) based on each patient's insurance coverage. All results are reviewed promptly. Abnormal or overdue results/tests are flagged for attention. All results/tests are ultimately reviewed, acted upon if necessary by the ordering or covering Clinician, and documented in the medical record including action taken, if any.

Purpose:

To ensure timely and appropriate review of all laboratory and imaging results/tests ordered by the practice.

Procedure:

Lab and imaging test ordering:

1. Clinicians order laboratory tests and imaging studies by completing the appropriate form (or EHR template) including all required fields to ensure accurate processing of the request.
2. Clinicians document labs/tests ordered in the clinical note, if associated with an encounter, or in the messaging section of the chart if in response to between encounter decisions about laboratory tests/imaging studies.
3. All discussions with patients (or families) are documented in the clinical record in the appropriate location.

Lab and imaging test tracking and review:

4. The ordering Clinician (or a covering Clinician; or a delegated team member) reviews incoming labs/test results on a daily basis and cross references the received results with those previously ordered. These labs may be pre-screened by the office personnel, but must ultimately be reviewed by a Clinician daily.
5. For laboratory tests/imaging procedures that are scheduled for a future date (or take some time to schedule), the clinical team puts a process in place to keep a record of ordered tests/imaging procedures (i.e., a filing system if on paper; a reminder system if electronic) to ensure that these results are not overlooked.



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6. If the Clinician or the clinical team member identifies that the results for an ordered test/imaging procedure have not been received within the expected timeframe, then the Clinician or clinical team member searches for those results.
7. Clinicians must initial and date the results of all lab tests/imaging results directly on the report (if a paper-based system is in place).
ALTERNATE IF USING AN EHR: Clinicians must verify that received tests/results have been viewed/acted upon through the EHR system.
8. Any action taken or initiated by a Clinician or team member in response to a lab test result or imaging test report must be documented (with date and, if relevant, time) in the medical chart.

Lab and Imaging Test Reporting to Patients

9. Clinicians and/or designated staff notify patients of all lab and imaging test results.
10. Results reporting can take place through the following processes:
 - (a) Phone call
 - (b) Secure email
 - (c) Sealed letter or folded/sealed post card
 - (d) Patient online portal/personal health record

