

ORDERING AND APPROVAL OF REFERRED OUT TESTS	Laboratory LAB-100
<b>Issuing Authority</b>	<b>Ken Baird, Vice President</b> Signed by Ken Baird Dated June 17, 2020  <b>Dr. Ed Randell, Biochemistry Division Chief</b> Dated September 9, 2019
<b>Office of Administrative Responsibility</b>	Laboratory Medicine Program
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## Overview

Some tests are not available locally and must be referred to out of province laboratories for analysis. Individually, these tests are ordered infrequently. Moreover, most health care professionals may be unaware of the specific sample requirements or the specific usefulness and/or limitations of the test.

In these instances, it is important that the ordering professional initiate contact with the laboratory at an early stage prior to sample collection to discuss the testing requirement and appropriateness of the test. A process is required to conveniently capture and record testing requirements prior to sample collection, and to confirm that testing needs are adequately addressed and specific test utility issues receive due consideration.

## POLICY

A **Laboratory Test Special Authorization Form** (The lab test approval form) must be prepared when there is need for a test that requires out-of-province testing. Completion of this form confirms that appropriate consultation with a laboratory

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professional has occurred prior to sample collection, or that necessary information is available to permit timely decisions on sample send-out. A list of frequently ordered out-of-province tests that are affected by this policy will be maintained by the laboratory and will be distributed to physicians on request.

If a sample is received by the laboratory for referred-out tests without a completed lab test approval form, it may be held without being sent out. In such cases the ordering professional will be requested to provide justification for the test request prior to the sample being sent out-of province for testing.

## Scope

This policy applies to all health care professionals with test ordering privileges and affects all requests involving tests sent out by the Laboratory Medicine Program.

## Purpose

To ensure rational test utilization, correct ordering, sample collection, and processing of unusual test requests; and to assure the send-out test requests are clinically justified.

## Procedure(s)

### 1. Requesting Referred Out of Province tests

To ensure timely processing of laboratory test requests for Out-of Province services the ordering professional must complete a lab test approval form and submit for review by a laboratory professional within the laboratory division responsible for the specific service. The form must be submitted prior to planning of specimen collection in order to ensure timely dispatch of appropriately processed samples.

### 2. Review of the lab test approval form.

A laboratory professional will review the lab test approval form and approve the request; or will initiate telephone contact with the ordering professional to resolve any outstanding issues related to test utilization before determining the final disposition of the sample.

Approved test requests are processed for test send-out and dispatched at the next scheduled time.

When test stability permits, samples from non-approved test requests will be held for 2 months, or until the ordering professional makes contact with

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the laboratory to discuss the sample disposition. The laboratory professional will attempt to make contact with the ordering professional to discuss sample/test disposition. The sample will be disposed of if no response is received from the ordering professional about the sample/test disposition within 2 months of the initial request. A notice indicating test cancellation will be sent to the ordering professional.

**3. Review of referred-out requests without completed lab test approval form.**

Approval of tests without a completed lab test approval form will be at the discretion of the Laboratory Professional and based on other information available at the time the test order request is being reviewed. Tests that are not approved will be held for a period of two months. A result comment will be issued on a report to the ordering professional indicating that the sample is being held and that clinical justification for the request is required prior to further processing of the request. Samples with unresolved disposition will be discarded after 2 months from the initial request and a test cancellation notice sent back to the ordering professional.

**4. Urgent send-out test approval.**

The sensitive nature of some measured analytes makes urgent or special processing necessary for send-out in some cases. Such priority tests include those where the sample is unstable at routine storage conditions and timely transport and analysis must be arranged; where non-routine sample processing is required; or where urgent test results are required for a patient management decision. In these cases contact must be made with the Laboratory Professional prior to sample collection in order to confirm sample specifications and allow selection of an accredited reference laboratory prepared to perform the testing.

Following consultation, the lab test approval form must be completed and submitted to the laboratory by the ordering professional. Sample collection should only occur once the Laboratory Professional has communicated with the ordering professional indicating if and when the sample can be sent and any risks to the sample associated with the arrangement.

**5. Discard of non-approved samples.**

A list of non-approved samples will be created and reviewed on a weekly basis. The Laboratory Professional will confirm individual samples for discard.

## Guideline

Referred-out tests are routinely sent to outside reference laboratories by Eastern Health. Specific questions surrounding the collection and processing of referred-out test samples should be directed to a designated laboratory professional within the appropriate laboratory discipline.

## Supporting Documents *(References, Industry Best Practice, Legislation, etc)*

Fryer AA, & Smellie WSA. Managing demand for laboratory tests: a laboratory toolkit. *J Clin Pathol* 2013;66:62–72.

Janssens PMW. Managing the demand for laboratory testing: Options and opportunities. *Clinica Chimica Acta* 411 (2010) 1596–1602

## Linkages

Laboratory test special authorization form  
Frequently referred-out test lists

## Definitions & Acronyms

<b>Referred out-of-province test</b>	Referred out of Province test refers to any laboratory investigation that is not available at a provincial laboratory and out of province laboratory services are required for analysis.
<b>Laboratory test special authorization form</b>	Information form for out-of-province test referrals and other tests requiring special authorization. This form must be completed as part of the test request approval process to insure timely analysis.
<b>Lab Test approval form</b>	Information form for out-of-province test referrals and other tests requiring special authorization.
<b>Laboratory Professional</b>	Laboratory Medicine Division Chief, Laboratory Scientist, Pathologist, or Laboratory Physician in the specific laboratory discipline that the test is a recognized responsibility.
<b>Ordering Professional</b>	Physician, nurse practitioners, or others with privilege to initiate a new order for a laboratory test, and is identified to receive and to act on the report.

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