September 17, 2024

BULLETIN

Pharmacists Ordering Lab Tests

Relevant legislation and regulation

Effective August 30, 2024, pharmacists are designated as "referring practitioners" in the Laboratory Services Regulation (LSR), under the Laboratory Services Act (LSA). The designation allows them to order certain laboratory tests, as benefits, for the purpose of medication management. The new authority is intended to enhance pharmacists' ability to perform comprehensive patient assessments for drug therapy management.

Tests pharmacists can order

Pharmacists may order outpatient fee-for-service (FFS) tests listed in Schedule H-Pharmacists Laboratory Services Referral Schedule, which can be found on the practitioner schedules on the Provincial Laboratory Medicine Services (PLMS) web page.

Non-fee-for-service (non-FFS) tests that are funded through a health authority's global operating budget and considered as benefits under the LSA can be ordered by pharmacists, provided the testing falls within their scope of practice. These tests will most often be ordered in inpatient or specialized settings, and generally will not apply in the typical out-patient setting. There is no separate comprehensive list of non-FFS tests that pharmacists can order.

Steps required for pharmacists to refer for laboratory tests

Pharmacists must apply to receive a unique Medical Services Plan (MSP) practitioner number. The practitioner number authorizes pharmacists to order select laboratory medicine tests for eligible MSP beneficiaries and allows laboratories performing these services to submit claims to MSP for remittance.

Pharmacists must register with laboratory operators, providing test result distribution and contact information, MSP practitioner number, and other details. A streamlined registration process has been introduced for pharmacists, allowing them to register with all lab operators in a single step using a form available on the PLMS website. After submitting the form, pharmacists must await registration confirmation before they can begin ordering laboratory tests.

Pharmacists can enroll and securely log on to CareConnect to view their patient's laboratory testing history, using their web browser. Pharmacists may also have access to test results through their pharmacy's EMR system.

Requisition form

Pharmacists in acute, inpatient, and some specialized settings may use existing laboratory requisition forms (approved under the LSA), following existing health authority policies.

To order laboratory tests for patients outside of acute, inpatient settings, pharmacists should use the Standard Outpatient Laboratory Requisition for Pharmacists (SOPLR-P), which can be found on the PLMS Requisitions web page.

Pharmacists must be registered with laboratory operators before laboratory tests are ordered.

Critical results

As per the College of Pharmacists of BC's (CPBC) standards, limits and conditions, pharmacists must have a system in place, available 24/7, to receive and respond to critical results. This could entail:

- Specifying after-hours and/or emergency contact information when registering with laboratory operators and when completing a requisition to order testing.

- Establishing agreements, partnerships, or arrangements such as on-call groups with other pharmacists or health professional colleagues (who can assume responsibility for receiving and appropriately acting on critical test results).

Inquiries regarding the practitioner schedule should be sent to pracbenefitscheds@phsa.ca

Inquiries regarding the pharmacist requisition should be sent to requisitions@phsa.ca

Further updates on pharmacy ordering lab tests can be found on the Ministry's website:

https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/health/practitioner-professional-resources/pharmacare/pharmacies/lab-tests

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