

Critical Values / Critical Results Policy

PURPOSE

This policy describes the responsibilities for determining results reported by the Mayo Clinic Laboratories (MCL) fulfill the criteria for critical values / critical results and describes the processes for notification, read-back and report documentation of those results.

DEFINITIONS

CRITICAL VALUE: A value that represents a pathophysiological state at such variance with normal (expected values) as to be life-threatening unless something is done promptly and for which some corrective action could be taken.

NOTE: The critical values do not necessarily correspond directly with normal reference values, toxic ranges, or therapeutic ranges.

POLICY STATEMENTS

1. **Notification:** The laboratory has procedures for immediate notification of a physician (or other clinical personnel responsible for the patient's care) when results of designated tests exceed established "alert" or "critical" values that are important for prompt patient management decisions.
2. **Read-Back of Critical Values/ Critical Results:** When critical values / critical results are communicated by phone, there is a "read-back" of unique at least 2 patient identifiers (name, date of birth, medical record number, or unique patient numeric identification) and the results is requested and documented.
3. **Documentation:** Records (date, time, responsible laboratory individual, person (full name) notified, and test results) must be maintained showing prompt notification of the appropriate clinical individual after obtaining results in the critical range.