

Critical Results / Critical Values Policy

PURPOSE

This policy outlines the responsibility for establishing those laboratory results that are determined to be critical and require prompt notification to the provider responsible for the clinical care of the patient.

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.