

Baystate Reference Laboratories

Richard C. Friedberg, MD, PhD
Medical Director

June 30, 2008

Dear Colleague:

Federal governmental agencies, third-party payers, and patients diligently review billing and test ordering practices and other related issues in an effort to contain costs in the health care industry. The Office of the Inspector General (OIG) suggests in the Model Compliance Program for Clinical Laboratories that, on an annual basis, we provide you with the following information:

1. Medicare's medical necessity requirements and a copy of the laboratory policy.
2. Components of profiles. This includes the names of tests, CPT codes, charges, Medicare reimbursement amounts applicable to each code used for billing the profile and/or its components and how the laboratory will bill Medicare for each profile.
3. Any changes in BRL CPT coding for the year.
4. A list of routine reflex testing.

We hope that sharing this information will lead to a better understanding of the regulations we work under and their impact upon our practice and procedures.

Baystate Reference Laboratories have undertaken a few initiatives in an effort to improve Patient Safety over the past year. We have enforced a more stringent policy regarding Labeling of specimens.

The Labeling Policy - The goal of this policy is to maximize the integrity of the linkage between an individual patient, his/her specimens, and test results generated on those specimens. It is of the utmost importance that all test results be reported to the correct patient, a process which may be seriously compromised when a specimen has had a problem with labeling, one type of "pre-analytic error." Since accurate test results are essential to support clinical decision-making, this type of medical error has the potential for significant adverse impact on patient safety.

Handling of Specimens Without Orders - If a specimen arrives without orders, that specimen will be held until the physician office can be contacted to obtain the orders. If the office is closed and specimen integrity (stability, viability, etc.) can be maintained overnight, we will contact the office the next morning. On the other hand, if the office is closed and the specimen integrity cannot be adequately maintained, we will page the ordering or covering physician after hours. This is the only way we can determine what tests were intended.

Thank you very much for your continued support of Baystate Reference Laboratories. If you have any questions regarding this letter or attachments, please feel free to contact me directly at 794-4550 or your BRL Sales representative at 413-322-4000 or 1-800-778-5599.

Sincerely,



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Chairman, Baystate Health Department of Pathology

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