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## Policies – Southwestern Vermont Medical Center

### **BILLING**

Southwestern Vermont Health Care will process billing to patients, Medicare, Medicaid, or the third party insurance company directly. SVHC accepts assignment from Medicare and Medicaid. For SVHC to provide this billing service, we depend on you to provide us with the Patient's complete billing information, including all medically appropriate diagnosis ICD-9 codes. If this information is not included on the patient's original requisition for lab services, we will need to contact your office to obtain this information. The ordering physician or his or her authorized staff must furnish any diagnosis information submitted on the claim. Payors, specifically Medicare continues to focus on Medical Necessity Guidelines. Medicare requires laboratories to include diagnosis on every claim as documentation of medical necessity. Medicare intermediaries and carriers, along with CMS (Centers for Medicare and Medicaid) have created national and local coverage determinations that restrict the medical conditions under which Medicare payment for certain tests will be made. If a limited coverage test is ordered with a diagnosis code that is not included in the predetermined list of diagnoses, Medicare will not pay for the test. **PLEASE PROVIDE THE MOST SPECIFIC ICD-9 DIAGNOSIS CODES, RATHER THAN A DESCRIPTIVE DIAGNOSIS, FOR EACH TEST ON EACH PATIENT.**

### **CPT CODING**

While this catalog lists CPT codes in an effort to provide some guidance, the CPT codes listed only reflect our interpretation of CPT coding requirements. It is up to each individual practice to determine the appropriate use of CPT code(s) for billing purposes. Particularly, in the case of a test involving several component tests, this catalog attempts to provide a comprehensive list of the CPT codes for all of the possible components of the test. Only a subset of the component tests may be performed on the specimen. You should verify the accuracy of the codes listed; and where multiple codes are listed, you should select the codes for the tests actually performed on your specimen. **SVMC ASSUMES NO RESPONSIBILITY FOR BILLING ERRORS DUE TO RELIANCE ON THE CPT CODES LISTED IN THIS CATALOG.** For further reference, please consult the CPT Code Manual published by the American Medical Association; and if you have any questions regarding the use of a code, please contact your local Medicare carrier.

### **CALL RESULTS**

The following results will be called. Every attempt is made to contact the clinician indicated.

#### Critical Values & Urgent Values:

Critical and Urgent values will be called to the ordering physician or patient unit as soon as the results are available. (see the Critical and Urgent Values lists located in this section).

#### STAT Results:

If you need a test done STAT write "STAT" on the laboratory requisition and indicate the person, phone number, beeper number or fax number to communicate the STAT result to. The

STAT result will be communicated as soon as testing is complete. Please see STAT list in this section.

Call or Fax Results:

If you need results called or faxed to your office, please fill in the appropriate box on the requisition and supply the phone/fax number. These results will be called or faxed to your office as soon as possible after the completion of the testing. If testing is performed during evening or night shift hours, calling or faxing will be done the next morning.

## **COMPLIANCE**

## **CONFIDENTIALITY**

## **PROFICIENCY TESTING**

## **REFERENCE RANGES**

## **SPECIMEN LABELING PROCEDURE**

## **SPECIMEN ACCEPTANCE/REJECTION POLICY**

### **PRINCIPLE:**

To eliminate any and/or all possibility of a test result being inaccurate or associated with the wrong patient due to improper and/or inadequate specimen identification and/or condition.

### **POLICY:**

All orders submitted to the SVMC laboratory must be given by a licensed caregiver as defined under state law. No specimen will be processed in the SVMC Laboratory unless it has been correctly (properly) labeled and identified and accompanied by a completed requisition (or other form of order in writing), as well as collected and handled according to test requirements.

### **The laboratory will reject a specimen IF:**

- The specimen is not labeled properly (i.e. full legal name and date of birth at the very least) or not labeled at all. Not labeled properly includes but not limited to; two different patient labels on one specimen.
- The handwritten label on the tube is such that the identification can not be matched to the requisition.
- The specimen is of insufficient volume to perform the requested testing.
- The specimen is received in a tube, cup or on media that has expired.
- The specimen is clotted for whole blood or plasma tests.
- The specimen container is broken or leaking.
- There is a delay in the time of collection to delivery time.
- The specimen has been improperly collected (incorrect preservative, anticoagulant, or handling etc).
- The specimen was shipped at an incorrect temperature.
- The specimen is contaminated.

- The specimen is of an otherwise poor or substandard quality...grossly hemolyzed, grossly lipemic etc. (Client Services staff should consult with a technical staff member before rejecting the specimen.)

**Should a specimen be rejected:**

- The lab staff will PROMPTLY notify an authorized person from the ordering location (provider's office or unit) when a specimen meets rejection criteria and is deemed unsuitable for testing.
- Should the specimen be unique, irretrievable or difficult to obtain such as (but not limited to) CSF, a surgical specimen, an aspirated body fluid, a biopsy or bronchial washing, a person in charge of that testing section or a pathologist will be consulted before proceeding.
- The appropriate departmental specimen rejection procedures will be implemented should a specimen need to be rejected and documented in the appropriate problem log as per protocol.
- If allowable, the laboratory will accept samples IF the individual who collected the sample will assume personal responsibility to correct specimen information and sign a waiver of liability. Results will not be released until information is obtained and/or the discrepancy is resolved and a comment will be entered on the report to document the action taken. Refer to the self-explanatory [Accountability Form: Specimen Identification and Waiver of Liability](#).
- Rejected specimens will be held "as is" until the nursing unit/client is notified and a final determination of acceptance or rejection will be made. Rejected specimens are discarded in biohazard waste containers as per standard laboratory protocols.

**EXPECTED SPECIMEN SUBMISSION CRITERIA:**

- Persons collecting a specimen should label the sample at the time of collection. The specimen label should contain (at a minimum) full name, date of birth and date of collection. If there is a problem with the size of the label on the tube, larger labels may be requested from the SVMC for labeling purposes.
- Two patient identifiers must be on each specimen – the patient identifiers chosen for outpatient specimens are the full name and date of birth (DOB).
- For Blood Bank testing, the complete name, DOB and red Typenex band number (usually one of the small red identification/tracking labels from the band) MUST match exactly. Date of collection and initials of person collecting the specimen are also required for tube labeling. Although a request for Blood Bank work (Type and Cross, Crossmatch or blood product request) on an outpatient is rare, these requests are received and it is mandatory that all phases of patient identification be explicitly followed. If there is any discrepancy, the specimen will be discarded and a new specimen requested.
- All specimens must be accompanied by a requisition or written order on a prescription pad page. Match the name on the sample to the name on the requisition. The first and last names should match exactly, with no abbreviations, initials or nicknames. If this criterion is not met, the specimen may be rejected. Couriers picking up specimens are responsible for verifying that a requisition accompanies each specimen picked up from a client's office.

- It is the responsibility of the staff member placing a secondary label on a specimen to verify and assure the information between the two labels match accurately. Whenever possible, the secondary label should be placed on the specimen so that the name on the original label is visible.
- Specimen labels should be placed on the container itself and not on the lid.
- The SVMC laboratory does not perform anonymous testing. However, HIV testing may be ordered through the use of an SVM# number, available through the Blood Bank department. Tracking the identity of such a patient is the responsibility of the ordering provider. The SVMC laboratory has no knowledge of the patient's identity.
- Specimens must be collected, stored and transported according to the specimen requirements listed in the SVMC Clinical Laboratory Test Compendium or Reference Laboratory test catalog(s).

## **SOUTHWESTERN VERMONT MEDICAL CENTER LABORATORY**

### **Accountability Form...Specimen Identification and Waiver of Liability**

Patient name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date of birth: \_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_

Location: \_\_\_\_\_ Date of collection: \_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_

Specimen test/type: \_\_\_\_\_

Reason for exception/rejection: \_\_\_\_\_

Staff member initiating this form: \_\_\_\_\_

***I ACCEPT FULL RESPONSIBILITY FOR HAVING COLLECTED AND CORRECTED THE SPECIMEN DESCRIBED ABOVE.***

Collected by (print name): \_\_\_\_\_

Collected by (signature): \_\_\_\_\_

Date / time \_\_\_\_\_

#### **Lab staff:**

**I have documented this event in Meditech as part of the patient record.**

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

## **OTHER COMMENTS:**

### **VERBAL/ADD-ON ORDERS**

Although we prefer patients to present for laboratory testing with an outpatient requisition, SVMC Laboratory will accept verbal orders for testing. Tests can only be performed at the request of a physician or other authorized individual. Verbal orders can be taken for new test orders or for additional testing on an existing specimen.

To comply with federal and state regulations, it is the policy of the SVMC Laboratory that all verbal order requests (including requests for outpatient add-on testing) must be followed up with a written request to the laboratory.

To place a verbal or add-on order, please call the SVMC Laboratory at (802) 447-5345, and then complete a SVMC Laboratory requisition. Write "verbal order" or "add-on order" at the bottom of the requisition, and then fax it to the Laboratory at (802) 447-5416, attention Susan Gallina. If we do not receive a faxed or written requisition within 48hrs, your office will be contacted for follow-up.

### **STANDING ORDERS**

When initiating a standing order, please fill out an Outpatient Laboratory Standing Order Requisition including the diagnosis, test(s), frequency and order date. If no end date is indicated, the standing order will expire in six months and will require renewal. Outpatient Standing Order Requisitions will be supplied initially and thereafter upon request via the Laboratory supply order form to all our clients.

Physicians will give the completed order to the patient to bring with them on the next visit to the laboratory or fax to the laboratory outpatient draw center. The original requisition will be kept by the laboratory outpatient draw center until the requisition expires at which time the patient and physician's office will be notified that a new order is needed for any subsequent laboratory visits.

Standing orders are valid for no longer than six months and the patient will be responsible for obtaining a new standing order from the physician prior to expiration.

## COMMUNICATIONS POLICY

### Laboratory Information to Clients:

- ◆ Laboratory Reports: Outpatient laboratory reports are printed daily and distributed to the provider's office either remotely or by courier or mail. Inpatient reports are printed automatically to medical records upon patient discharge and all test completion. STAT reports are printed immediately upon test completion to all providers that are part of the SVHC system network.
- ◆ Lab Links Memos: "Lab Links" memos are distributed whenever a test is updated or changed or a new procedure or policy is being put into place.
- ◆ SVMC Laboratory Intranet Web Page: Located under the "Department" tab on the SVHC Intranet, the Laboratory web page contains all historical "Lab Links" memos, the full on-line SVMC Laboratory Test Compendium, as well as other pertinent laboratory data and links.
- ◆ Faxing: Reports may be faxed to authorized points via our faxbox or fax machine in accordance with the Laboratory and SVHC corporate privacy procedures.
- ◆ Phone Results: When giving laboratory results over the telephone the Lab staff will request the recipient to repeat each result back to insure that the recipient has recorded the result(s) correctly. The Lab staff will record in Meditech, in the comments section, to whom the result(s) were given, the date and time, that a verbal read back was made and your initials.

### Requests for results from a physician's office:

- ◆ Results are available to local, ordering/consulting physicians through the Meditech system. Out of system consulting physicians will receive a mailed copy of the results and can be referred to the ordering physician for the results if needed sooner.
- ◆ If a physician's office calls to request patient results who has Meditech access, the Lab staff will kindly let them know that the results, if available, may be located online.
- ◆ If a physician's office calls to request patient result who does NOT have Meditech access, the Lab staff will first determine if the physician calling is the ordering physician, the patient's primary care physician or was otherwise listed in Meditech to receive the results of that patient's tests. If yes, the Lab staff will offer to fax the results instead of reading them over the phone. If no fax machine is available, refer to the "Phone Result" above. If the calling office has not been noted to be a recipient of the patient's results, the Lab staff will request that the office obtain a copy of the results from the provider(s) to whom the results were originally sent.

### Requests from physicians for unusual testing:

When a physician makes a request for unusual testing outside of the standard protocol or for an expensive procedure (>\$500.00), the Lab staff will refer the request to the pathologist on call for authorization.

