



MEDICINE of THE HIGHEST ORDER

TO: All URMFG Faculty and Community Providers

FROM: Raymond J. Mayewski, MD
Chief Medical Officer

Steven I. Goldstein
President and Chief Executive Officer, Strong Memorial & Highland hospitals

DATE: November 15, 2011

RE: **New Policy Regarding Ordering of Send-Out (Reference Laboratory) Tests**

We are writing to inform you of new changes in the URMC formulary of reference lab tests available to ordering providers.

Over the past year the URMC Laboratory Diagnostics Committee (LDC) has obtained input from well-respected, subspecialty trained clinicians practicing in the Rochester area. With their expert advice, the LDC was able to assess the clinical utility of the increasing number of reference laboratory tests being offered by industry. These expert recommendations allowed the LDC to develop a menu of laboratory tests offered through URMC Labs divided into the following three tiers:

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|---------------------------------|--|
| TIER 1 (UNRESTRICTED) | Tests available to all providers. |
| TIER 2 (RESTRICTED)* | Tests restricted to board-certified, subspecialty-trained physicians holding Medical Staff Privileges at Strong Memorial or Highland Hospitals. |
| TIER 3 (OFF-FORMULARY) * | Tests of unclear, controversial, or poorly proven clinical value. |

***PLEASE NOTE:**

LABORATORY TESTS ASSIGNED TO TIER2 (RESTRICTED) OR TIER3 (OFF-FORMULARY) CATEGORIES UNDERGO CONTINUOUS REVIEW BY OUR MEDICAL SUBSPECIALTY EXPERTS. FUTURE CHANGE AS TO WHICH TESTS ARE ASSIGNED TO THESE RESTRICTED CATEGORIES IS ANTICIPATED. AN UPDATED LIST OF THOSE TESTS AFFECTED BY THIS NEW POLICY CAN BE FOUND AT THE URMC LABORATORY FORMULARY WEBSITE: <http://www.testmenu.com/rochester>

THIS WEBSITE ALSO PROVIDES INSTRUCTIONS AS TO HOW PROVIDERS CAN APPEAL TO LDC FOR ONE-TIME ACCESS TO AN UNAVAILABLE TEST BASED ON DOCUMENTED, PATIENT-SPECIFIC, MEDICAL NECESSITY.

THESE NEW RESTRICTIONS WILL GO INTO EFFECT DECEMBER 1, 2011.

While we hope that this policy does not have a significant impact on your clinical practice, we realize there may be some providers with concerns. These efforts are specifically aimed at better aligning the use of these reference laboratory tests and our patients' medical needs. Below are frequently asked questions we anticipate providers may have resulting from this policy change:

Q. Why is URMC adopting this policy?

A. The Laboratory Diagnostics Formulary Committee has analyzed data regarding reference laboratory test utilization. Utilization patterns suggest frequent use of tests with questionable clinical benefit. Also, in their review of tests ordered through URMC Labs, the specialist subcommittees have identified tests that are either of limited clinical utility, or require interpretation by specialists in the field.

Q. If send-out tests are covered by payers, why is URMC restricting access?

A. URMC is carefully preparing for the future and trying to do our part to control healthcare costs. Many of these tests are expensive and of limited value in diagnosis or management.

Q. Does this policy mean I will not be able have access to these tests to meet the needs of my patients?

A. No. Providers have several options. Given the unique clinical issues linked to the need for reference laboratory testing, we recommend providers work closely with specialist providers at URMC or elsewhere in the Rochester area with expertise in the subject area of concern. These subspecialty providers can help gauge the relative need for and value of testing and, in some cases, may be authorized to order such tests for patients they personally evaluate. Alternatively, providers may elect to send the clinical specimen directly from their own office to the reference testing facility. In this circumstance, URMC Labs can assist with phlebotomy or other sample procurement, should such assistance be needed.

Q. If a provider has a specific concern with this policy, is there an appeal process?

A. Yes. Providers may appeal by writing to the Laboratory Diagnostics Committee at:
LaboratoryDiagnosticsCommittee@urmc.rochester.edu

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