

**SUBJECT: SPECIMEN PRIORITY**

**1.0 Scope:**

This policy applies to all specimen collected and or processed at JTDMH laboratory.

**2.0 Policy:**

All specimens will be handled according to the priority assigned to each.

**3.0 Definitions of test priority and turnaround time expectations:**

**3.1 STAT** - A test listed on the approved "STAT List" (see policy Lab 1.08). These tests are available 24 hours a day and take precedence over Timed, Urgent, or Routine tests in collection, analysis and reporting.

3.1.1 Nursing personnel are required to call the lab for notification that a STAT test is to be drawn.

3.1.2 If the lab is requested to collect the STAT specimen, a collector is expected to be with the patient within 15 minutes from the time the lab is notified by a phone call. Requests for STAT collection will be addressed in order of receipt of notification unless specific information is given to the lab that a patient's condition warrants immediate attention. Delays in collecting STAT draws should be called to the nursing unit informing of them of the delay and expected time to draw. Document in the LIS if there is any delay in drawing patient and who you spoke to

3.1.3 Benchmarks for STAT turn-around-time standards will be:

3.1.2.1 < 90 minutes from ordered in EMR to verification in Lab

3.1.2.2 < 60 minutes from collection to verification in Lab

3.1.2.3 < 45 minutes from receipt in lab to verification in lab

**3.2 URGENT** - This priority helps the lab identify those orders that require more immediate attention. All specimens from Home Health organizations will be considered URGENT.

3.2.1 Nursing personnel are required to call the lab for notification if the next routine collection rounds time is within an hour of the time when the order is entered into the hospital's EMR.

3.2.2 If the lab is requested to collect the URGENT specimen, a collector is expected to be with the patient within 60 minutes from the time of notification. A turnaround time of less than 4 hours after collection can be expected

**3.3 TIMED** - Designed for instances when a physician desires collection at a specific time.

3.3.1 The lab will collect the specimen at the designated time (+/- one half of an hour) and report the test within 4 hours of designated time. **Exception:** Therapeutic drugs will be collected as close to the designated time as possible to ensure dosing accuracy. Important! Drug levels should be drawn as close to the requested time

3.3.2 Nursing personnel are required to call the lab for notification if the draw time is within an hour of the time when the order is entered into the EMR.

**3.4 ROUTINE** - A turnaround time of less than 8 hours after collection can be expected with the exception of tests that are referenced to another lab and those tests which are batched.

3.4.1 Routine inpatient specimens will be collected at designated times:

3.4.1.1 Early AM rounds: begin at 0430-0500, completed by 0700, reported by 0800.

Note - Time draw:  
If a nurse requests a test be drawn early or if the nurse collects a test early just confirm with the nurse her request and complete request. The nurse is on the front line of the patients care and decision making.

3.4.1.2 Other day shift rounds: 0900, 1030, 1300

3.4.1.3 After 1300 rounds: draws completed by phlebotomist's discretion

**3.5 To Change the Stated Priority of a Test:**

3.5.1 If a patient's condition warrants that lab tests be collected, analyzed and reported faster than the assigned test priority would merit, the health care provider must call the lab with specific information. The lab must know what patient needs immediate attention, why it is necessary and specifically what needs to be done.

**Policy Approval:**

**Policy Reviewed:**

Thomas Geis, MT(ASCP)

Laboratory Manager

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**Policy Approved:**

Patrick Feasel, MD

Lab Medical Director

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