

IDENT	Lab200.032
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Title of Owner	Network Dir Ops Lab&Path Svcs
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**TITLE:** Collection Date and Time of Laboratory Specimens

**POLICY STATEMENT:** As defined by CMS (Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services), the date and time of service for lab tests is defined as the date and time the specimen was collected. The date of service that is reported on the billing claim must match the date the specimen is collected. While it is the responsibility of the ordering physician to supply the accurate collect date and time, it is the responsibility of the UVM Medical Center laboratory to accurately transcribe the date and time of specimen collection. This policy applies to all UVM Medical Center laboratory departments that – receive, accession and process laboratory specimens.

**PURPOSE:** The accurate collection and documentation of specimen collection dates and times are necessary to –

- accurately report test results and for test result interpretation.
- comply with the CMS guidelines for timely, accurate and compliant billing of testing.
- reduce the rework for lab staff to fix billing date errors.
- comply with the new UVM Medical Center guidelines to reduce the delay before billing.

Collection Date and Time is defined for different sample types as follows:-

1. The Date and Time of Collection is defined as the date the specimen was obtained from the patient. In the event that the specimens are obtained over the course of several days (e.g. 24 hour urine collections) the date of collection is defined as the date when the specimen collection was complete.
2. If multiple specimens are submitted with different collection dates, these must be identified clearly on the requisition and different accession numbers must be created for each date of service. (E.g. stool cultures and Ova and Parasite requests). This rule does not apply to Fecal Occult Blood specimens.
3. If multiple specimens are received with the same collection date , but different times (Glucose tolerance testing) then the general rule is if the test is orderable under one code in Sunquest then one collection time is sufficient.
4. If a specimen is deemed an “archived specimen”(see Definitions), then the date of collection is the date it is retrieved from storage for testing.
5. Special circumstances may exist that warrant exceptions for stored specimens. See Appendix 1
6. Pooled specimens are specimens, much like 24 hour urine, which are collected over an extended time period, on one patient, and then pooled together when they are all received in the laboratory. Specimens are at times pooled to obtain maximum diagnostic value e.g. sputum for cytology. If specimens are pooled, this should be noted in the comment section, and the date/time of collection would be the date that the last specimen is collected.
7. Consults - The date of service used for consults is the date the consult request and outside slides/materials are received by our facility.
8. Research Samples – The date of service is the collection date, and research should be client billed to the account number.

9. “Add on” tests – The **original** date of collection serves as the collection date, **unless** the sample has been archived (see Definitions). If the specimen meets the “archived” definition, then the collection date is the date it is retrieved from storage.

#### **PROCEDURE:**

1. When a collect date and time are received on the requisition, then it must be accurately transcribed into the order entry system including both Sunquest and CoPATH. It is the responsibility of the accessioning department to assure both the collect date and time on the requisition and in the order entry system match exactly.
2. If there is any discrepancy or missing collect date the information must be clarified with the ordering site. Until the discrepancy is resolved receiving staff should enter today as a default and test FONR with “verifying collect date” as a result. These requisitions should be identified and passed on to the “central receiving client call” for resolution. As these are resolved the client call person will enter the correct collection date.
3. The individual who obtains the corrected collect date/time must identify who and when they received this information from on the requisition. This is documented in Sunquest using FONPRB order code.
4. The appropriate collect date and time must be placed on the laboratory requisition in order to complete the billing process.
  - a. If the collect date cannot be obtained from the ordering site, because of potential loss of specimen integrity, then the test will be run with the received date as the collection date.
  - b. If an ordering provider contacts the laboratory to amend a collect date after the result has already been reported, then an amended report will have to be issued out of Sunquest and an appendix report will be issued from CoPath to the ordering provider and any copy to providers.
  - c. If the collect date is amended then the billing must also be corrected and the information sent to the Laboratory Reimbursement Specialist.
5. Critical Values – If a critical value is reported on a specimen when the collect date has not been confirmed, the laboratory will contact the ordering provider with the critical value in accordance with our policy “Reporting Critical Values”. In addition a disclaimer about the results should also be communicated.

“A Collect date was not received from your office when you submitted this laboratory specimen, therefore we have entered the collection date as the date that we received the specimen. Please note that the laboratory was not able to determine if the specimen integrity was compromised as a result of the collection date not being confirmed.”

#### **MONITORING PLAN:**

Review annually or as procedure changes

#### **DEFINITIONS:**

**ARCHIVED SAMPLE:** a sample that has been stored for more than 30 calendar days (i.e. it has been 30 days since it was originally collected).

**DISCREPANCY:** an obvious error in collect date, e.g. no date indicated, impossible date - 2/30/05, future date, etc.

**RELATED POLICIES:** Reporting Critical Values  
LIS procedure : Sunquest Incorrect Date Correction (CDE)

**REFERENCES:** N/A

Documents Status: **Approved**

**REVIEWERS:**

Lynn Bryan, Manager Business Systems & Client Services  
Monica Sullivan, Manager, Core Lab and Specimen Receiving  
Tim St. John, Manager, Anatomic Laboratories  
Michael R. Lewis, MD, Division Chief, Laboratory Medicine  
Pamela Gibson, MD, Division Chief, Anatomic Pathology  
Nicole Carney, Quality Officer  
Cindy Nelson, Manager, Clinical Laboratory

**OWNER:** Tania C. Horton, Network Dir Ops Lab&Path Svcs

**APPROVING OFFICIAL:** Mark K. Fung, MD, Medical Director of Clinical Laboratories