



TITLE

**POINT OF CARE TESTING (POCT)**

SCOPE

Provincial

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Clinical Operations Committee

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SPONSOR

Quality and Safety Executive Committee

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Not applicable

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**NOTE:** The first appearance of terms in bold in the body of this document (except titles) are defined terms – please refer to the Definitions section.

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## OBJECTIVES

- To define roles of authority, responsibility and accountability for **Point of Care Testing (POCT)** within **Alberta Health Services (AHS) settings**.

## PRINCIPLES

AHS recognizes Alberta Precision Laboratories Ltd. (APL) (hereinafter referred to as “the Laboratory Provider”) to be the responsible body with authority for governance, oversight, and quality of all POCT practice within AHS in compliance with appropriate standards.

A POCT multidisciplinary management group with applicable representation from laboratory, administration, information systems, procurement and clinical programs, is appointed by the Laboratory Provider and responsible to advise on POCT.

## APPLICABILITY

Compliance with this document is required by all Alberta Health Services employees, members of the medical and midwifery staffs, students, volunteers, and other persons acting on behalf of Alberta Health Services (including contracted service providers as necessary).

## ELEMENTS

### 1. Points of Emphasis

- 1.1 Appropriate standards, for the purposes of POCT, are considered to be the International Standards Organization (ISO), Accreditation Canada, and the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Alberta (CPSA) accreditation standards.

- 1.2 AHS recognizes that accurate, precise and reliable results from POCT devices are important to ensure effective and safe patient care. POCT can also guide actions and behaviors to achieve excellent patient care.

## 2. Authority

- 2.1 The POCT Multidisciplinary Management Group (MMG) is responsible for providing advice, assistance and authority on the provision of POCT within AHS.
- a) The MMG shall be appointed by the Laboratory Provider. Refer to the *Point of Care Testing Service Framework* for MMG information and a complete list of representative programs and areas.
- 2.2 The MMG shall:
- a) ensure authorities are defined and communicated within AHS and the Laboratory Provider;
- b) ensure responsibility is shared between the Laboratory Provider and the applicable user group;
- c) ensure devices and systems are evaluated and selected to include performance criteria such as analytic and clinical validity, clinical utility, cost effectiveness and ease of use;
- d) evaluate and approve, when appropriate, requests for **Point of Care Testing (POCT) program(s)** in accordance with the mandatory criteria (e.g., quality assurance) required for the POCT program as outlined in the *Point of Care Testing Service Framework*; and
- e) ensure there is a funding source for all the costs of POCT including, but not limited to, capital, operations and implementation.

## 3. Roles and Responsibility

- 3.1 The MMG and the Laboratory Provider shall ensure that:
- a) users are trained, competent and follow standard operating procedures, accreditation standards and industry standards of practice;
- b) users are responsible to report all POCT devices, both active and under consideration, to the Laboratory Provider;
- c) equipment is validated, properly stored and handled, and functioning correctly;
- d) reagents are validated, working properly, not expired or deteriorated, and are appropriate for use;

- e) processes are in place to ensure that staff properly prepare for tests, confirm patient identity, safely and effectively perform the tests, and accurately and securely report POCT results;
- f) AHS provides the necessary resources and governance documents to deliver high quality POCT;
- g) the quality of POCT is regularly monitored and quality improvement initiatives are implemented;
- h) appropriate action is taken when non-compliance is identified in accordance with program requirements; and
- i) they are involved with the development and decision-making regarding POCT contracts as outlined in the *Point of Care Testing Service Framework*.

## DEFINITIONS

**Alberta Health Services (AHS) setting** means any environment where treatment/procedures and other health services are delivered by, on behalf of, or in conjunction with, Alberta Health Services.

**Point of Care Testing (POCT)** means any testing that typically occurs outside a designated laboratory environment, and is completed nearer to, or at the site of the patient/client. This includes all testing performed by non-laboratory personnel regardless of the location of the examination.

**Point of Care Testing (POCT) program** means the patient and quality testing done with a POCT device, as well as the activities required to support the POCT device and end user, including but not limited to: validation, quality assurance (e.g. quality control), education, and competency.

## REFERENCES

- Alberta Health Services Resources
  - Point of Care Testing Service Framework
- Non-Alberta Health Services Documents:
  - *Point-of-care testing (POCT) - Requirements for quality and competence*, 2006 International Standard Organization (ISO 22870)
  - *Standards for Diagnostic Laboratory Accreditation: General*, February 2020-V8 (College of Physicians and Surgeons of Alberta)
  - *Accreditation Canada Standards*

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