

IRL INFORMS...newsletter

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SIX SIGMA UPDATE

IRL is preparing for its first system-wide inspection by the College of American Pathologists (CAP) to become one of the largest certified CAP Systems in the country. IRL has been engaged in a process to standardize its policies and procedures across all of our 14 laboratories including:

Core Lab	U of M Hospital,	Kendall Regional Medical Center
Aventura Medical Center	Westside Regional Medical Ctr	Plantation General Hospital
Northwest Regional Medical Ctr	University Hospital	JFK Medical Center
Palms West Hospital	Raulerson Hospital	St. Lucie Medical Center.
Lawnwood Regional Medical Ctr		

For you, our customer, this integration means greater reliability and consistency in IRL's ability to serve you and your patients.

In support of the standardization of policies and procedures, IRL continues to develop its Lean Six Sigma initiative. Lean Six Sigma is a quality management process that helps us reduce our TAT, ensure accuracy, and improve our efficiency thus helping us keep costs and pricing under control. Lean Six Sigma is becoming widely adopted in the healthcare industry. IRL has trained employees at the Yellow, Green and Black Belt levels to participate in this process of continuous improvement. IRL also employs a Lean Six Sigma Master Black Belt to lead the initiative to deliver consistent quality to our clients and patients.

ROLE OF THE MICROBIOLOGY LABORATORY STAFF

At IRL we have a Microbiology laboratory staff that offers the highest level of medical microbiology expertise in the South Florida region, all under one roof. Our team of 54 Microbiology professionals process over 2,000 tests daily for bacteria, parasites, viruses and fungi using state-of-the-art technology including molecular-based assays. We are dedicated to offering the most advanced infectious disease (ID) testing combined with friendly, professional laboratory service.

The interpretation of microbiology tests is still quite hands-on, requiring professional judgment and significant bench expertise. IRL emphasizes training and continuing education for all our staff members. This is clearly reflected in our excellent performance in the College of American Pathologists (CAP) proficiency surveys where we consistently score 100%. During our last CAP Inspection, IRL's Microbiology Lab was found to be "extremely efficient and a model example of what every laboratory should strive for."

IRL Microbiologists work closely with ID clinicians and with infection control practitioners to assist in preventing healthcare acquired infections (HAI). We also help clinicians monitor infections in immunosuppressed patients by offering molecular tests such as viral load for HIV and HCV.

What makes our microbiology laboratory special is not our cutting edge technology, but our people. Our team is passionate about setting the standard for ID diagnoses delivered with a personal touch. We are focused on the patient first and foremost.

To reach our Microbiology personnel, or call with inquiries, contact us at 954.777.0018, x433.



DID YOU KNOW?

Copies of our State license, and Federal & CAP certificates can be found on our website: irfl.com. Just click the link, "Licenses/Certifications" on left navigation bar.

It's about time.



DECEMBER National Health Observances

Safe Toys and Gifts Month
World Aids Day - December 1

National Aplastic Anemia and MDS Awareness Week - December 1-7

TIPS FOR QUALITY TEST RESULTS

If you collect specimens in your office, the following tips will help guarantee accurate testing and quality test results:

- Label all specimens at time of collection in the presence of the patient
- Gently mix purple tops, blue tops and others with anticoagulants
- Remove needles from syringes **BEFORE** sending to the laboratory to prevent injuries
- Ensure lids are screwed on tightly to urine containers.

IRL thanks you and your staff for taking these extra steps to ensure accurate results.

Client Testimonial...

"We are happy with IRL's STAT service, which is obviously very important to us. Our IRL representatives are always prompt to respond to our needs. Your couriers are dependable and consistently on time to pick up our specimens...we look forward to working closely with IRL as they play an important role in providing quality patient care."

Melanie Poundal, Practice Nurse
Cancer Center of South Florida,
Lake Worth, FL

CMS RULES PHYSICIAN SIGNATURE STAMPS ARE NO LONGER ACCEPTABLE ON ANY MEDICAL RECORD, INCLUDING ORDERS FOR TESTS AND SERVICES

In an effort to ensure your understanding of our billing requirements, we are taking this opportunity to alert you to a revised requirement from CMS (CR 5971, Transmittal #248, <http://www.cms.hhs.gov/MLNMattersArticles/downloads/SE0829.pdf>). The purpose of the CMS communication is to notify healthcare providers that **stamped signatures are no longer acceptable on any medical record, including orders.**

- The requirement applies to all healthcare settings that treat Medical patients
- Please discontinue use of signature stamps in the medical record and on orders for tests and services.
- Handwritten, faxed handwritten, and electronic signatures are permissible.



Talk to us!

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For additional information on our laboratory, please visit our website at:

www.irlfl.com

Effective November 1, 2008, IRL no longer accepts stamped signatures on orders, prescription forms and requisitions. If a stamped signature is received, we will work to obtain a compliant signature prior to a test being billed.

Thank you for your cooperation and continued support!

It's about time.