

LabCorp Insights

A quarterly newsletter for managed care health plans

LabCorp—One Source for Routine Testing and Specialized Pathology

DIANON Systems is a recognized leader in anatomic pathology, clinical pathology, and molecular oncology testing. With DIANON as a member of the LabCorp family, providers can **rely on a single source for specialized pathology services as well as routine clinical testing.**

When it comes to new procedures and technical advances for complex, suspicious, or unusual cases, DIANON is an acknowledged technology pioneer. But DIANON's service goes beyond testing. It also includes solutions that help address the resource-intensive challenges clinicians regularly face with cancer diagnosis and management:

- **Daily, second-opinion review processes by pathologists with expertise in particular organ sites** are conducted on all malignant, suspicious, and difficult cases,
- **Clinical consultation with board-certified clinical and anatomic pathologists on staff** who have additional training and certification in their subspecialties,
- **Additional consultations** are provided at no additional charge on questionable cases **with leading, university-based pathologists who are recognized experts in their fields,**

- **Diagnostic, color reports that integrate findings from multiple sources** including clinical test results, sample photomicrographs, photographs, trending, and other pertinent information,
- **Practice-specific statistical reports** that allow the provider to compare his or her office pathology experience to that of DIANON's national data base,
- **PathREQ™, an electronic test ordering module that interfaces with more than 80 practice management systems,** helping to eliminate the administrative burden of handwriting and/or copying patient demographic and insurance information for test orders,
- **On-line results reporting options,**
- **Patient-centric CarePath™ materials designed to help patients** prepare for biopsy procedures, better understand their diagnoses, and obtain more information about specific diseases.

Contact your LabCorp managed care representative for more information about DIANON's services, or visit www.DIANON.com.

Top-Ranking Health Plan Recognizes LabCorp

Capital Health Plan (CHP), an affiliate of BlueCross BlueShield of Florida, recognized LabCorp's Florida division for its commitment and guidance in the creation and implementation of a connectivity solution for the plan's data management needs. Calling LabCorp a "true collaborative partner," CHP Medical Director, Charles Tomlinson, attributed CHP's distinction as a quality health care plan to relationships like the one it shares with LabCorp. Danny Shoemaker, Senior Vice President for LabCorp's Florida division, added, "to get to better patient care, the project truly required us to view each other as partners."

LabCorp has been providing clinical laboratory services to CHP since 1998.

In October 2005, the National Committee for Quality Assurance (NCQA) and *U.S. News & World Report* ranked CHP in the top 20 nationally for commercial plans and number four nationally for Medicare plans based on clinical performance, member satisfaction, and accreditation information. According to these rankings, CHP is also as the number one plan in Florida and the Southeast.

A nonprofit organization headquartered in Tallahassee, Fla, CHP was formed in 1982 by local citizens.

Variable Customer Need Drives LabCorp Connectivity and Data Management Solutions

Recognizing our strength and expertise in testing and results delivery, LabCorp's connectivity focus is on providing laboratory data and tools so that health plans and providers can conveniently access and configure data according to their needs.

Currently, LabCorp is able to integrate laboratory data with a growing list of systems that includes more than 300 practice management systems (PMS) and approximately 305 electronic medical records (EMR) packages.

The newly released eLabCorp provides a secure, Web-based solution for test orders and results. On-line test ordering capability allows for orders to be entered electronically in the provider's office, saving resources and minimizing transcription errors that can occur with handwritten requests. The system also prints test request forms should hard copy be needed.

eLabCorp also allows physicians to obtain clear, easy-to-read electronic results reports any time of day, from anywhere there is access to a standard browser and a high-speed Internet connection. eLabCorp offers a standing-order feature to help physicians manage patients who require regular testing, and electronic tracking provides a record of orders that need follow-up, a useful tool for encouraging patient compliance.

LabCorp DataLink puts convenience and flexibility in the hands of managed care staff when data management and analysis are needed. Using various filter options, LabCorp DataLink can be queried for standard reports or to download data to customize reports for HEDIS reporting, disease management, standards of care, pay for performance, and member population profiles.

Patient- and Customer-focused Laboratory Standardization

At LabCorp, laboratory standardization is a dynamic, patient-focused initiative built on specific goals with measurable results that translate into enhanced patient care and customer-centered service levels. Among the benefits are:

- **Instrument automation and consolidation that remove manual intervention** (ie, sample pipetting, result entry from instrument to laboratory information systems), minimizing “quantity not sufficient” (QNS) reports
- **Ability to meet customer commitments for turnaround time**
- Standardized platforms allow procurement of sequestered lots of reagents, calibrators, and controls that provide data for **inter-laboratory quality comparisons**
- Standard operating procedures across the core laboratory network that facilitate **dissemination of best practices and consistency in addressing regulatory requirements**
- Standardized equipment that provides the same analyses across laboratories, to facilitate **successful disaster recovery and business resumption**.

The benefits of standardization were demonstrated at LabCorp during and **after the 2005 hurricanes. Work was transported from one laboratory to another and patient specimens were processed while maintaining the flow of critical test information to providers.** This would not have been possible without laboratory standardization.

LabCorp has created a standardized network of core clinical laboratories that use the same test numbers, sample requirements, instrumentation, reference intervals, and laboratory information system. Consequently, **providers do not need to determine test numbers based on laboratory location.** Standardization also provides a solid foundation on which provider- and patient-driven change may be rapidly implemented.

The responsibility of standardization falls within the purview of LabCorp’s department of science and technology. It is comprised of a group of **laboratory professionals who identify and collaborate with selected vendors to determine which instruments and processes best meet the needs of LabCorp’s customers and their patients.**

Key considerations in this process are the vendor’s ability to provide accurate and precise test methods and respond rapidly to our extensive network of core clinical laboratories.

Vendor relationships include the provision of regularly scheduled performance reports to LabCorp, thereby incorporating vendor accountability into the relationship. **Service levels to providers are maintained as a consequence of the communication and coordination between LabCorp and its vendors.** Centralized purchasing, an integral part of standardization, helps to ensure that all core laboratories receive appropriate consumables, reagents, controls, and calibrators.

To our knowledge, no other clinical laboratory network has achieved the level of standardization LabCorp has achieved.

Asthma Management: An Opportunity to Optimize Health Care

In its recently released report, *The State of Health Care Quality 2005*, the **National Committee for Quality Assurance (NCQA) reported minimal gains in improvement in the management of the sixth most common chronic condition—asthma.**¹

Each year, children miss nearly 14 million school days because of asthma, and it accounts for 14.5 million lost workdays for adults. **The economic burden of asthma is significant—\$14 billion annually, including \$4.6 billion in lost productivity.**¹

Clinical studies have shown that **children who develop atopic dermatitis^{2,3} or allergic rhinitis⁴⁻⁷ at a young age have an increased tendency to develop asthma** as they grow older. Observations suggest that **early**

diagnosis and intervention may positively affect the progression to asthma and thereby improve quality of life. Moreover, such clinical intervention seems to be most effective if initiated before the age of six, thereby increasing the importance of early diagnostic testing.⁷

While a presumptive diagnosis of allergic disease can often be made from history and physical exam, **many allergic conditions exhibit symptoms that are hard to distinguish from nonallergic conditions. Diagnostic testing allows providers to:**

- Confirm the diagnosis of atopic or IgE-mediated allergy,
- **Differentiate atopic allergy from other disorders that may produce similar symptoms,**

- Identify offending allergens, and
- Provide guidance in the management of allergen avoidance plans or appropriate treatment.

LabCorp’s **quantitative allergen-specific IgE testing can assist providers in confirming their clinical impressions.** The technology provides a direct measurement of IgE, yielding a quantitative result for every allergen tested. In addition, **it is a patient-friendly approach** because it requires a single blood sample. **Managing patients’ allergy care within the primary care setting gives providers a more complete picture of their patients’ developing health status and allows providers to maintain their patients’ continuity of care.**

References

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