

Newton-Wellesley Hospital's LAB REPORT

Autumn 2007

Newton-Wellesley Patient Service Center Welcomes MGH Patients

The Newton-Wellesley Laboratory at the Parc Center is now providing phlebotomy services to Massachusetts General Hospital (MGH) patients at our Patient Service Center. The Center is located at 40 Second Avenue in Waltham. MGH patients are referred to the Waltham facility from the main MGH campus and from the MGH physicians located at the Parc Center. Responding to our customer needs, the Service Center is now staffed with two full-time phlebotomists and is open Monday through Friday from 8:30 am to 5:00 pm.

Getting LEAN in the Lab

In the spring of 2007, the Laboratory was chosen to participate in the first LEAN Program at Newton-Wellesley Hospital. LEAN is defined as the relentless pursuit of the perfect process through waste elimination. LEAN thinking is an integrated approach to designing, doing and improving the work of groups of people working together to produce and deliver goods, services and information. The goal of incorporating this thinking in the Laboratory was to improve processes by applying the use of the LEAN principles.

The LEAN Team looked at the Laboratory layout and operational flow in the central processing area. They mapped the walking patterns of the employees and determined that employees were taking unnecessary steps due to the layout. The action plan was to create a better workflow and decrease the number of unnecessary steps taken by employees. The result of this process improvement included faster turnover times in test results to ordering physicians.

The Team also looked at the outreach courier route to ensure specimen processing was distributed evenly throughout the workday. Many offices had large quantities of specimens at certain times to be picked up and sent to the Laboratory. When the specimens were delivered to the Laboratory, a majority needed to be registered. This resulted in a “bottlenecking” of specimen registration and processing. The registration of all the incoming specimens was time consuming and labor intensive. The plan of action was to increase the number of courier visits to certain offices that had an abundance of specimens. This increase resulted in faster turnaround times for all physicians to get their patient's results because the specimens could be processed in a timelier manner.

The implementation of the LEAN Project has helped the Laboratory provide services that create value for the customer with the least amount of waste and maximum degree of quality.

LEAN Project – By the Numbers

- The walking distance for send-out tests was decreased by 80 percent (from 66 miles per year to 12). That is two Boston Marathons!
- A standard procedure was implemented for specimens shared between departments. There was a 50 percent improvement in the percentage of specimens searched for before starting testing in the next department
- Phone call interruptions were reduced by 75 percent (from eight per hour to two per hour) by implementing a phone tree and removing unnecessary calls from specimen processing.



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Laboratory News

We are pleased to announce that Robert Page has joined the Newton-Wellesley Hospital Laboratory as the Director of Laboratory and Surgical Pathology Services. For the past six years, Bob has been the Director of Laboratory and Surgical Pathology Services at North Shore Medical Center. Before becoming the Director, Bob held several laboratory leadership roles within North Shore Medical Center and Charter Professional Services. He has extensive lab operations, lab outreach and customer service experience. Bob is excited about working with the Newton-Wellesley Hospital Laboratory and growing outreach services. He is committed to providing excellent customer service experiences combined with outstanding care to all Laboratory customers.

Bob can be reached at 617-243-6772 or via email at rffpage@partners.org. Please join us in welcoming Bob to the team.

Improving the Effectiveness of Communication Among Caregivers

To ensure patient safety, Newton-Wellesley Hospital has a defined policy and regularly monitors the timeliness of reporting and documenting critical test results. The policy requires the laboratory technologist to confirm the result and immediately communicate the result to the responsible physician or nurse practitioner. It is not acceptable to only communicate the critical value to the office secretary.

The caregiver receiving the verbal report will document the result and read back the patient name, test name and critical result to the reporting technologist using the read-back procedure. The Meditech laboratory information system will require the technologist to record the name of the person who communicated the critical value. The date, time and technologist's name will be automatically recorded.

Billing Information for Medical Necessity

To ensure correct and accurate billing the following information is collected on the Laboratory requisition: specific ICD-CM codes for signs and symptoms for each test ordered. Compliance is mandatory and regulated. An Advance Beneficiary Notice (ABN) will be issued to patients if specific tests (color-coded red on the requisition) are ordered without a supporting diagnosis.

Got Clean Hands?

Reduce the Risk of Health Care-Associated Infections

Newton-Wellesley Hospital policy requires the use of the CDC Hand Hygiene Guidelines:

- **Before patient contact** – use alcohol-based hand rub or soap and water
- **After patient contact** – if hands are visibly dirty, use soap and water
- **If hands are not visibly dirty** – use alcohol-based hand rub or soap and water
- **Contact Precautions Plus** – use soap and water then alcohol-based hand rub

Fall Office Luncheon

The Newton-Wellesley Hospital Laboratory invites all office managers to our fall office luncheon on Thursday, October 11, 2007. The luncheon will be held in Bowles Conference Room 4/5. Please RSVP to Nichole Cordon, Marketing Associate at 617-243-5898.



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New Technology

Chemistry – Allergy Testing to be Processed at Newton-Wellesley

The Chemistry Laboratory is in the process of performing method evaluation and training with Sieman's Immulite 2000 – capable of performing 200 tests per hour. The Immulite 2000 has a varied test menu including allergy testing as well as other tests that are currently being sent out to our reference laboratory. When the installation and training is complete, our technologists will be performing many of the most common allergy tests, as well as DHEA, Insulin, Thyroglobulin antibodies, Beta 2 microglobulin and AFP at the Newton-Wellesley Hospital Laboratory.

Hematology – State-of-the-Art Technology

The Hematology Laboratory has installed a new Sysmex HST automated hematology analyzer line. The IS and Engineering Departments prepared the area for this technology. There has also been off-site training for the Hematology's supervisor and technical specialist. Method validation and additional staff training will follow installation.

The new system will process patient specimens for CBCs, differentials and reticulocytes. The system's sophisticated middleware will provide state-of-the-art specimen and data management. Sysmex's highly automated system will make blood smears when needed, stain the smears, repeat specimens as needed and provide archival storage.

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