

Policy #:	404 (PLH-404-03)	Effective Date:	NA	Reviewed Date:	2/1/2010
Subject:	PROTOCOL FOR LABELING & TRANSPORTING LABORATORY SPECIMENS				
Approved by: Laboratory Executive Director, Ed Hughes (electronic signature)					
Approved by: Laboratory Medical Director, Mark P. Burton, MD (electronic signature)					

PROTOCOL FOR LABELING & TRANSPORTING LABORATORY SPECIMENS

Before collecting specimens positive identification of the patient must be made. Verify patient identification (name and hospital account number) by using the hospital patient armband before collecting a specimen. Name and hospital number on the armband must match the request. When possible ask patient to state their name. For patients without an armband (clients and walk-in outpatients) verify identification by comparing to the request the name and date of birth.

Never pre-label tubes Always label blood tubes before leaving the patient's bedside. If no computer label is available, label the tubes in a legible manner. Labels should include entire name, hospital number (from the armband), time and date, and initials of person obtaining the blood. Exception to this is blood drawn for Transfusion Service using a computer label. The computer label must have the hospital number handwritten, from the patient's armband, to ensure laboratory staff the hospital number was verified. If collected with the patient identification system the system label is acceptable without handwritten number.

Manual Laboratory request slips are available for Microbiology specimens or if the HIS is down. Be sure to fill out the manual request slip completely. It is imperative for the manual request slips sent for Microbiology to have the time of collection documented.

All specimens from patients should be properly labeled and put in clean containers with a secure lid. Care must be taken to avoid contaminating the outside of the container and the laboratory request slip accompanying the specimen. If specimens are transported via the pneumatic tube system, they are placed inside a biohazard bag to cushion and contain.

Specimens that are not to be sent via the pneumatic tube system include: Tissue specimens, Thoracentesis fluid, Cerebral spinal fluid, and specimens that are difficult to obtain. These specimens should be delivered to the Lab Delivery room on the 2nd floor of the lab building.

Pathology specimens for Cytology and Histology received after hours, nights, weekends, and holidays should be delivered to the Lab Specimen Delivery room on the second floor of the laboratory.

Transport/Shipping Specimens:

The laboratory complies with all current applicable federal, state and local regulations for shipping and transporting infectious and diagnostic specimens. All applicable personnel are trained on appropriate packaging and proper packaging material is utilized.