Purpose: To ensure accurate, timely and standard ordering, tracking and follow-up of laboratory orders.

Policy: Coastal Family Health Center (CFHC) will utilize electronic ordering, tracking and alerting of lab testing through electronic medical record technology.

Procedure:

1.0 Ordering Labs

1.1 Standing Orders

a. All standing orders will be entered through the Orders Module using approved diagnoses.

b. Standing orders will be resulted and the results will be provided to the patient at the time of the patient’s next medical visit following the lab.

1.2. In-house Lab Orders (not specified as Standing Orders)

a. All in-house labs that are not Standing Orders will be entered in the Orders Module by the provider.
   • All patients must be scheduled and have an encounter created in the Electronic Practice Management (EPM) at the front desk for lab appointments.
   • Lab staff will review the lab section on the schedule to confirm the correct lab order and diagnosis code within the Orders Module one day prior to the visit.
   • Lab staff will also verify that all future orders are scheduled correctly utilizing the calendar in the orders module to ensure attachment to the appropriate encounter.

c. After the patient is checked in and the encounter is created in EPM at the front desk, the lab is notified that the patient is ready via the “Patient Tracker” in the Electronic Health Record (EHR). The “Patient Tracker” will be set to “Waiting for Lab.”

d. When the patient arrives in the lab, the lab specimen will be collected and handled as instructed in the Lab Specimen Collection policy.

e. All in-house labs will be resulted at the time of visit. Charges are sent at the time in-house labs are resulted as specified in the Lab Charges policy.

1.3. Contract Lab Orders

a. All contract labs will be ordered in the NextGen Orders Module by the provider.
   • All patients must be scheduled and have an encounter created in EPM at the front desk for lab appointments only.
• Lab staff will review the all orders on the schedule to confirm the correct lab order and diagnosis code within the Orders Module one day prior to the visit.
b. After the patient is checked in and the encounter is created in EPM at the front desk, the lab is notified that the patient is ready via the “Patient Tracker” in EPM. The “Patient Tracker” will be set to “Waiting for Lab.”
c. When the patient arrives in the lab, the lab specimen will be collected and handled as instructed in the Lab Specimen Collection policy.
d. All contracted lab orders will be electronically sent to the contract lab via interface for processing and resulting. Charges are sent at this time as specified in the Lab Charges policy.

2.0 Tracking Contract Lab Results

2.1 All labs must be resulted via the interface within 5-7 days of test, unless specified by the contracted lab.
a. All lab staff will check Rosetta Holding tank daily to reconcile any contract lab results with missing patient information to make sure that the results flow into the patients’ charts.
b. All lab staff will run a daily “Lab Results Tracking” report in NextGen EHR under Provider Reports. This report will only pull labs without results and will specify the patient’s name, Order date, Test Description, Order Status, Rendering Provider, Encounter date, and Location.
• The lab staff will specify the time period for the report and the rendering provider(s) for the lab’s location within the report filters.
• For labs over 5-7 days old without results, the lab staff will contact the contract lab and ask that the results are both faxed and retransmitted to the patient’s chart via the interface.

3.0 Provider Sign off

3.1 All contract and in-house Labs will be sent to the Provider Action Queue (PAQ) for signature.
a. All abnormal results will be highlighted in red within the PAQ in order to alert the provider of the abnormal results.

3.2 Providers must sign off on Lab results in their PAQ within two business days of receipt.

4.0 Normal and Abnormal Lab Follow Up

4.1 In-house lab results may be given to the patient by the provider at the time of the patient’s lab/medical visit.
4.2 For contract labs and in-house labs not signed and given at the time of the visit, the following patient notification process will occur:
   a. After the provider signs the results, he/she will immediately send a task to a designated staff member, depending on whether the results are normal or abnormal.
      • If the results are normal, the provider will task a designated staff member to contact the patient via phone with the results.
      • If the results are abnormal, the provider will open a provider Test Action template and task the nurse/MA to contact the patient via phone with the results and follow up instructions.
      • Any unsuccessful attempt to reach the patient by telephone, whether results are normal or abnormal, will be followed up with a letter sent to the patient with results and further instructions, if needed.
      • Patients must be notified of abnormal lab results within three business days and normal lab results within 7 days of results being signed by the provider.

4.3 The designated staff member responsible for contacting the patient will document the method of contact, date contacted, results, instructions given, and patient understanding in an “Outgoing” telephone template in the patient’s chart.

Guidelines: N/A

Definitions:

Related Links/Forms:
1.0 Lab Specimen Collection Policy
2.0 Lab Charge Policy

References: N/A

Appendix: N/A