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Subject:	INTRODUCTION				
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INTRODUCTION

The Department of Anatomic and Clinical Pathology Laboratory provides the diagnostic examinations of all specimens removed from patients at the Jackson-Madison County General Hospital, and clients of Medical Center Lab. Personnel are present at all times, and pathologists are on call at night to answer any consultation requests. The hospital operator can locate a technologist if there is no answer at Extension 17990. Calls between 22:00 and 08:00 should be limited to essential communication concerning patient care. Since the weekend and holiday staff is also reduced, you are requested to postpone non-urgent matters until regular working days.

In order to manage the high volume of procedures ordered in an efficient and economical, yet reliable manner, it is necessary to schedule as many tests as possible and process them in single piece flow as appropriate. To the greatest possible extent, blood specimens are collected daily by 07:00 with the patient in the fasting state. In order to avoid repeated venipunctures it is desirable to obtain blood for all tests intended at this time.

Orders for tests must be written in the patient's chart (and eventually signed by the physician), and transmitted to the laboratory by computer order entry. This is a non-intelligent messenger with a limited but expandable dictionary. Accurately written orders are essential for appropriate implementation. If the computer is not operating, the orders are manually transcribed to laboratory request forms and sent to the lab via pneumatic tube. Oral requests for patient testing will be followed by a written or electronic authorization within 48 hours. Verbal or phone orders must be read back to verify accuracy of order. All specimens must be accompanied by an adequate requisition. The requisition must include name, location, & hospital number of patient, name and address (if different than JMCGH) of ordering physician, test requested, time and date of collection, and patient's date of birth. If requested order is not clear, physician will be contacted to clarify the order.

In an effort to maintain cost effectiveness, utilize services effectively, and minimize clerical error, we urge you to anticipate your diagnostic needs and make your requests in a timely and orderly fashion.

Specimen collection is continued throughout the day and night, and many tests can be obtained at any time. A schedule of tests performed in house with turn-around times are listed in this

handbook. The turn-around times (specimen receipt in lab - result reported) are estimates of the maximum time necessary to respond. Ordinarily, only stat requests will be done as an immediate test. Tests ordered for a certain time will be treated as a request to know the patient's value at that time and will be drawn at the time indicated. These are then added to the routine workload and reported as early as possible. If you must know the results of a test as early as possible without disrupting work flow by stat ordering, use the term "ASAP" (as soon as possible). These will be analyzed early (first on the routine schedule) and reported as soon as results are available.

A list of current test methods, including performance specifications are available upon request.

Note: When this manual cannot be accessed because of power outages or other situations when the policies are not available electronically, a hardcopy can be found in the Laboratory Library and in the Nursing Staffing Office. The master copy is kept in the Laboratory Quality Assurance Manager's office.