

Position Statement

Point of Care Testing

The Canadian Society for Medical Laboratory Science (CSMLS) endorses Point of Care Testing (POCT) when its implementation and performance is overseen by an accredited clinical laboratory. A POCT program is a collaborative and coordinated process between the clinical laboratory and other health care professionals, and there is published evidence that the use of this technology improves the quality of patient care.

POCT is laboratory testing performed at or near the patient, outside a central laboratory environment. It is usually performed by non-laboratory health care professionals using a variety of methods which may include strips, kits or instrumentation. Benefits to POCT may include improved turnaround times, improved patient outcomes, reduce diagnosis and treatment time, and reducing on call for laboratory staff.

Technological advancements have produced portable, easy to operate instruments that can deliver rapid, high quality test results.

Point-of-care testing programs require:

- Approval and selection of POC tests and instrumentation
- Inter-discipline collaboration and effective communication
- Evaluation and determination of potential improvements for patient outcomes
- Standardization and performance verification of instrumentation
- Personnel training, certification and re-certification
- Accessible continuing education program
- Ongoing resources to support the program
- Effective cost management

All personnel involved in the circle of care must maintain focus on assuring continuous quality of all laboratory testing wherever the procedures are performed. Medical laboratory professionals have the responsibility for the management of quality assurance by providing leadership and expertise in:

- Developing, maintaining, operating and reviewing appropriate training programs to ensure competency of operator
- Assisting in the development of standard operating procedures
- Establishing and monitoring appropriate documentation (as per retention policy)
- Establishing and monitoring quality control practices
- Implementing and auditing proficiency programs
- Ensuring compliance with equipment maintenance and operation protocols

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Reference:

ISO15189:2022 Medical laboratories — Requirements for quality and competence
<https://www.iso.org/obp/ui/en/#iso:std:iso:15189:ed-4:v1:en>