

# IRL INFORMS...newsletter

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## IRL TRANSPORTATION DEPARTMENT EXCEEDS SIX SIGMA PERFORMANCE LEVEL FOR 2007

**On time performance for hard copy printing - 100% Reports delivered to the correct address - 100%**  
Specimen Transportation is one of the most important services IRL provides its clients. The reliability and accuracy of our Transportation staff are critical to delivering fast turnaround times for patient specimen results. For all of 2007, Transportation exceeded Six Sigma level performance by being flawless on two important metrics for their department:

- On-time performance for hard copy printing
- Reports delivered to the correct address

In 2007, IRL's Transportation Department didn't "miss a beat," performing at 100% on both of those metrics.

We are very proud of our dedicated Transportation staff and their commitment to safety, accuracy, and timeliness in pickup and delivery of our clients' specimens. Without their commitment to excellence, IRL cannot consistently perform at such a high level for its clients. The Transportation Department is already off to another stellar year for 2008. Our thanks go out to the entire staff of the IRL Transportation Department. They will be recognized at an upcoming ceremony in their honor.

If you are interested in more information about *Six Sigma*, please contact IRL's Quality Director, Fred Patton at 954-777-0018 (X413).

## LABORATORY REPORTING OF CRITICAL VALUES



Most clinical laboratory results have diagnostic and therapeutic implications that do not require urgent physician attention. However, occasionally laboratory results are so extreme that they may indicate a potentially life threatening situation requiring immediate notification and action to the physician so that suitable treatment could occur quickly.

At IRL, critical values for specific tests are determined by collaboration between laboratory pathologists and physicians.

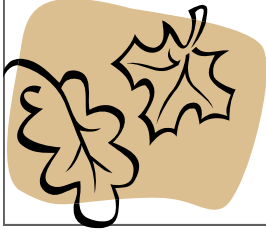
It is very important to understand that by regulation, IRL personnel must call all patient results which are "critical values" to the patient's healthcare provider. **There is no exception.** By regulation, the laboratory personnel calling the critical result must have the critical value "read back and confirmed" by the medical personnel receiving the critical value who is usually a licensed healthcare provider or physician. This information must be documented in writing by the IRL Staff providing the critical value result.

*It's about time.*



### DID YOU KNOW?

IRL accepts **ALL** products of **UNITED HEALTHCARE INSURANCE** whether you draw/collect in your office or utilize an IRL Patient Service Center.



**SEPTEMBER**  
**National Cholesterol Education Month**  
**Ovarian Cancer Awareness Month**  
**Prostate Cancer Awareness Month**

Attention Practitioners:  
Remember to send your cholesterol screens, PSA orders and other blood work to IRL.

**WHEN COLLECTING SPECIMENS FOR CULTURE: SWABS SIMPLY WON'T "CUT-IT"!**

Swab specimens are a poor choice for microbiologic culture and should only be submitted when tissue, aspirates, exudates, pus or other fluid samples are not available. The fact is that specimens collected with a swab or small amounts of tissue or fluid placed into a swab tube are bad specimens for pathogen recovery. Swabs only hold about 150 micro liters of fluid. At best, they yield a low number of microorganisms from the clinical sample and at worst, they may result in a false negative culture. This is because only 3% of bacteria absorbed onto a swab are recovered in culture (97% do not survive!!!). Also, anaerobic bacteria are rapidly killed on swabs due to exposure to air but survive well inside tissues or fluids during transport. Tissues should be submitted to the laboratory inside port-a cult tissue transport device or a sterile container with a small amount of sterile saline. **Do not submit specimens in formalin as this renders the culture non-viable.** Fluids may be submitted in small sterile containers without preservative or they may be directly inoculated into blood culture bottles. If a swab must be used for specimen collection please submit separate specimens for multiple culture requests, e.g., bacterial, AFB, fungal culture. Refrigerate (do not freeze) all AFB, fungal, and viral cultures to prevent bacterial overgrowth. Hold all other swab specimens at room temperature until transported.

**Please remember: When there is a choice, tissue and fluids are ALWAYS superior to specimens collected on swabs. For quality culture results, send tissue or aspirated fluid samples to microbiology and do not send swabs!**

If you have any questions, feel free to contact Aida E. Casiano-Colón, Ph.D. (D)ABMM, Microbiology Clinical Director, IRL

**New to the neighborhood!!!**  
**IRL Patient Service Center**  
**Port St. Lucie West**  
Conveniently located at:  
140 SW Chamber Street, #100A  
Port St. Lucie, FL  
Phone: 772-621-3646  
Hours: Monday to Friday  
8am—4:30pm  
(located behind Riverside Bank at California and St. Lucie West Blvd.)

**Physician Testimonial...**  
"With IRL, my patient results are right on time and accurate. Abnormal results are immediately called into my office allowing me to expedite good care to my patients. The Access IRL solution makes things simplified and I can access results from anywhere, which is great!"  
Dr. Isidro Pentzke, Pentzke Medical Center  
West Palm Beach, Florida

**WANT YOUR RESULTS AT YOUR FINGERTIPS?**

**ACCESS IRL IS THE SOLUTION...**

Access IRL is a web-based application that allows IRL clients to place specimen orders and access patient reports quickly, efficiently, and securely through the internet.

Access IRL is an electronic laboratory test ordering and reporting system designed for use in physicians' offices or any remote location with an internet connection. This easy-to-use tool allows physicians and their office staff to simply enter and modify patient information, order laboratory tests, and view or print test results through a direct connection with IRL's information system. You can use your own computer or IRL can supply a computer, printer and internet connection.

**Giving a new definition to saving time**

- Easy to use (Internet based)
- Eliminates manually written requisitions; patient requisitions ready in just a few clicks!
- Performs medical necessity checks for patients on Medicare and will warn user of failed ICD-9 codes and generate a printed ABN for patient to sign
- Reduced order errors and phone time with lab by 60%
- On-demand results printing
- Greater functionality and quick lookup to view past patient orders and report history
- Configures to your existing workflow

If you are interested in an Access IRL demonstration, please contact an IRL Account Representative by calling 954-777- 0018 (X315) to set up.

**Talk to us!**

**IRLB.IRLINFORMS@HCAHealthcare.com**

For additional information on our laboratory, please visit our website at:

**[www.irlfl.com](http://www.irlfl.com)**



*It's about time.*