Proficiency Testing Monitoring

The Joint Commission and the Clinical Laboratory Improvement Amendments (CLIA) require you to maintain successful performance on proficiency testing (PT). The Joint Commission receives unsuccessful proficiency testing performance data from CMS for all regulated analytes through an electronic communication link. Unsuccessful performance is defined as a failure to achieve satisfactory performance for two consecutive or two out of three consecutive testing events. The following are considered unsuccessful proficiency testing performance:

- Failure to attain a score of at least 80% for all specialties, subspecialties, or tests, except ABO group and D (Rho) typing and compatibility testing for two consecutive or two out of three consecutive testing events.
- Failure to attain a score of at least 100% for ABO group and D (Rho) typing or compatibility testing for two consecutive or two out of three consecutive testing events.

When unsuccessful proficiency testing occurs, a letter will be posted to the organization’s secure Joint Commission Connect site to request a Plan of Action. Laboratories will be asked to submit information including, but not limited to the following:

- Current and Historical PT Reports
- Analysis and corrective action of the unacceptable proficiency testing results
- Steps taken to assure the accuracy and reliability of patient results
- Review and approval of the corrective action by the laboratory director named on the CLIA Certificate

If the problem cannot be resolved, an on-site evaluation may be conducted which may ultimately affect your accreditation status. An on-site evaluation may also be conducted for extreme problems or those that jeopardize patient safety. At any time during the process, the lab may voluntarily discontinue testing. If the laboratory decides to voluntarily discontinue testing, the project manager at the Joint Commission must be notified in writing. The laboratory may not reinstate testing until the Criteria for Reinstatement are met and the laboratory receives written confirmation from The Joint Commission that it may resume testing. Reinstatement criteria include, but are not limited to, evidence of satisfactory performance on two proficiency testing events.

If the Plan of Action is acceptable, a letter will be posted to the organization’s secure Joint Commission Connect site. Proficiency testing monitoring will continue. The laboratory will be required to submit copies of the next two consecutive proficiency testing events.

If the laboratory fails to achieve satisfactory performance on one of the next two events, the laboratory must cease testing for a minimum of six months after the notice is issued for the testing specified. The laboratory may not resume testing until the Criteria for Reinstatement are met and the laboratory receives written confirmation from The Joint Commission that it may resume testing.

A full description of the “Requirements for Accreditation” may be found in the Comprehensive Accreditation Manual for Laboratory and Point-of-Care Testing in the “Accreditation Participation Requirements” chapter.

For questions or notifications regarding unsuccessful proficiency testing and submission of corrective plans of action, please contact the Project Manager “ by phone at (630)792-5248, via e-mail estawczyk@jointcommission.org, or in writing at The Joint Commission, One Renaissance Boulevard, Oakbrook Terrace, IL 60181.