



## Submitting Patient Test Orders and Specimens

### *New Patient Orders, Standing Orders, Add-on Orders*

#### **Fax Numbers**

Central Fax:	For Submitting Regular Orders & Standing Orders	301-665-4996
Client Services Fax:	Confirm Phoned Patient orders, Supply orders	301-665-4949

#### **Phone Numbers**

For laboratory results and general information call	301-665-4900
Toll Free	800-428-2105

- MML's Central Fax number allows providers to fax a Patient Order to one central location; once the order is received and entered, all MML Patient Service Centers can access the patient's order. It is essential that all faxed orders have the patient's FULL NAME and BIRTHDATE legibly printed on the request form, as well as that of the ordering provider. Patients can then present to any MML PSC to be drawn regardless of whether it is a one-time order or a standing order. Please note that there are a few tests which are limited to being collected ONLY at designated Patient Service Centers. Refer to the MML Test Catalog specific test entries to see which PSCs can perform the test.
- ALL orders must contain the patient's full name and a secondary patient identifier (DOB). The name of the ordering provider must also be listed on the order. The signature of the ordering provider is required if the patient is presenting for testing at Meritus Medical Center.
- Supporting Diagnosis- The Department of Health and Human Services and the Office of Inspector General in guidance published August 24, 1998 require that laboratories communicate to physicians that laboratory studies must be signed in accordance with applicable state or federal law and must be accompanied by sufficient clinical information (ICD-9 code, diagnosis, sign or symptom) to define the medical necessity of the ordered studies. Medicare will only pay for tests that meet the Medicare coverage criteria and are reasonable and necessary to treat or diagnose an individual patient. Section 1862(a)(1)(A) of the Social Security Act.
- Standing Orders- Please note, MML will only honor Standing Orders for **180 days** from the date of the order; if a patient's Standing Order exceeds 180 days, the patient and the physician's office will be notified when the patient presents at MML for service that a new order must be obtained. We will service the patient **ONE** time after the order expires as a courtesy. Note that standing orders must include the frequency to be performed.
- Telephone orders will be accepted with the understanding that the practitioner will follow up with a written order

### **Additional Testing on Specimens Already Submitted ("Add-On Tests")**

If a physician writes orders for additional tests after specimens have already been collected or submitted to Meritus Medical Laboratory, it may be possible to avoid an additional collection in accomplishing the order. This would apply to specimens less than 24 hours old for the most part. When this occurs, do the following:

- Call to confirm whether this is possible or not.
- If it is possible, provide the following information:

- Patient's name
- 10-Digit account number
- Doctor's name
- Tests requested (if drug, the date and time of last dose is necessary)
- Caller's name

Note that all requests for add-on testing must be followed by a written order (or an order for AOT via Meditech Order Entry.) If a problem arises after the order is taken, the section within the laboratory responsible for the testing will notify the unit or specialty area. This would most likely occur because there is not sufficient specimen available, the integrity of the specimen does not allow the additional testing or the patient is a Medicare patient and the test to be added requires an ABN and/or is not covered by the existing ABN. Requests for outpatient add-on testing should be faxed to Meritus Medical Laboratory.

### **MML Policy for "Add-on" Tests for Medicare patients which would require ABN's**

Due to the frequency limitations and medical necessity requirements on many tests for Medicare patients, we will not accept "Add-ons" if the testing requested fails medical necessity and the original order did not include an ABN which specifically covered the test(s) the provider wishes to add. *Medicare requires that the Patient sign and date the ABN prior to receiving service/being drawn.* Client Services will verify the medical necessity during order entry and will notify the provider's office if we are unable to add testing due to these requirements. Of course, if the ordering provider supplies additional diagnostic information which eliminates the need for an ABN, the order may then be added. If the add-on still fails, the test cannot be performed without having the patient return for reregistration, including completion of an ABN, if necessary, and a new specimen obtained.

### **Specimens Collected by Practices and other entities**

When you collect laboratory specimens in your office, it is imperative that we get complete and accurate patient demographics and insurance information. The patient information provided must be complete, paying particular attention to the following:

- Full Patient Name (no nicknames or abbreviations)
- Date of birth
- Patient's address
- Social Security number
- Name of ordering Provider
- Signature of ordering practitioner

### **Insurance Billing of Courier Specimens**

In cases where the patient's insurance is to be billed, please provide complete information, including a photocopy of the insurance card. Please include this information with each order, even if you believe there has been no change since the last specimen from that patient was submitted. The copy of the insurance card has become particularly important because a single insurance company may have several different plans each with a different billing address. Managed care plans may also be confusing due to the fact that certain members of a plan may not be covered because of geographic restrictions. Including all of the information will preclude time consuming phone calls and delays in processing your specimens.