

National Patient Safety Goals: FAQ's

Goal #2: Improve the Effectiveness of Communication among Caregivers

1. **What are the requirements of this goal?** The goal requires that the hospital define the following:
 - a. Which results are considered for diagnostic tests and procedures at MGH
 - b. By whom and to whom results are reported
 - c. The acceptable length of time between the availability and reporting of critical testsThe goal also requires that the organization evaluate the timeliness of reporting of critical results.
2. **Does this goal apply only to the laboratory specimens?** No. This goal applies to all clinical areas that perform diagnostic testing and generate results. These include anatomical pathology lab, clinical laboratory, ECG lab, ECHO lab, Holter lab, nuclear cardiology, pulmonary lab, imaging, and vascular lab.
3. **I am a nurse and sometimes I take a laboratory result over the phone in the hallway; I write it down on my worksheet and read it back. Is that acceptable?** Yes, that is acceptable. After you hang up the phone, you should write the telephone order in POE.
4. **I work on an inpatient unit. The lab calls by phone and gives a critical result to the operations associates (OA). Does "read back" apply to them also?** Yes, read back applies to all staff.
5. **I know that when OAs take a laboratory result over the phone, they document it in the Critical Result Log. Is it okay if just the first name of the nurse is documented?** No, the full name of the person taking the call as well as the full name and credentials of the person to whom the OA reports the result must be documented in the log
6. **When RN's I take the result directly over the phone from the laboratory, is it necessary for them to document it in the Critical Results Log?** No. RN's are not required to document in the log.
6. **I am a nurse on an inpatient unit. Should I document in my progress notes the time I received the result?** As part of your documentation, you should include the time you received the critical value and the action taken. For example...contacted Dr. Smith regarding K>7.
7. **What is the allowable time frame from the time the test is called to the unit to the time the provider (MD, PA or NP) receives the result.** The acceptable time frame at MGH is 10 minutes
8. **What is the total allowable time frame for critical values from time the result is ready in the lab to the time the provider gets the result?** The acceptable time frame at MGH is 40 minutes.
9. **How does the lab evaluate the timeliness of reporting?** The hospital conducts routine monitoring of all critical tests and makes recommendations to improve the timeliness of reporting.
10. **Where can I find the policy regarding reporting of critical test results?** The policy, *Laboratory Results: Guidelines for Retrieving and Reporting*, is in the *Clinical Policy and Procedure Manual*.