

## **LABORATORY SUPPORT SERVICES INTRODUCTION**

Non-technical laboratory functions are performed by several specialized units that comprise Laboratory Support Services. This section is supervised and administratively represented by the Director, Administrative Operations.

The Support Services Section exists to provide the support necessary to enable the Georgia Public Health Laboratory perform the testing that it does. It is responsible for the pre- and post- analytical processes for specimen testing and reporting, and it acquires and warehouses the supplies needed. Additionally, budget, personnel, billing, purchasing, contracts, building security and the reception desk are also managed in this unit.

Components of the Georgia Public Health Laboratory Support Services Unit are briefly described below:

### **Central Accessioning and Data Processing**

With few exceptions, specimens sent to the Public Health Laboratory are received in the Central Accessioning area. Packages are opened and each specimen is numbered with a bar code label. The patient's demographic information and requested tests are entered into the Laboratory Information System (LIS).

### **Reports and Records Office**

This office distributes laboratory test result reports electronically, by U.S. Mail and courier services (when provided by submitters). Electronic copies of reports are kept on file for reference in accordance with record retention schedules that are coordinated through DCH.

### **Service and Supply Unit**

This unit provides all purchasing services for the Laboratory and oversees all equipment maintenance and agency contracts. It also includes warehouse operations, the mail room, the outfit room, and courier service for outbound deliveries.

### **Laboratory Billing Unit**

This unit handles the billing for all fee-based testing at the GPHL.

The Support Services Unit's goal is to provide the administrative support necessary to its internal and external customers to ensure the efficient and effective delivery of laboratory services to the residents of Georgia.

Bill Shea

Director, Administrative Operations

## BILLING UNIT

The Laboratory Billing Unit prepares and mails invoices for infectious disease and newborn metabolic screening tests. We have replaced the previous fee stamp (pre-payment) process with an automated invoicing system.

### INFECTIOUS DISEASE

Effective April 1, 2010 the fee schedule at the Georgia Public Health Laboratory was revised for infectious disease tests. The changes are summarized below:

1. Fee stamps are no longer sold for laboratory testing. Customers receive a monthly invoice from the GPLH at the end of each month for their billable tests. Customers may continue to use any fee stamps already purchased. Invoices will be sent for any billable test not accompanied by the appropriate fee stamp.
2. Laboratory test fees will increase for the five tests listed below. These tests are billable to all GPLH customers, including Public Health providers.

<input type="checkbox"/> Blood Lead Test	\$10.00
<input type="checkbox"/> Hepatitis C Test	\$10.00
<input type="checkbox"/> Routine HIV Test	\$10.00
<input type="checkbox"/> Syphilis Serology Test	\$10.00
<input type="checkbox"/> Well Water Test (total coliform)	\$30.00
3. The fees for all other billable infectious disease tests will remain \$8.00 and are billable to private health care providers. Public Health providers are exempt from these fees.

### NEWBORN SCREENING

Effective July 1, 2010 the fee for Newborn Screening is increased to \$50.00 per specimen submitted, subject to exclusions for mandated repeats. The Medicaid and PeachCare reimbursement rates have been increased accordingly.

Please call the Georgia Public Health Laboratory Billing Unit at (404) 327-7933 with any questions.

OCGA § 31-2-1 (18) states, in part: "The individual who requests the services authorized in this paragraph, or the individual for whom the laboratory services authorized in this paragraph are performed, shall be responsible for payment of the service fees. As used in this paragraph, the term "individual" means a natural person or his or her responsible health benefit policy or Title XVIII, XIX, or XXI of the federal Social Security Act of 1935."



## REPORTS AND RECORDS UNIT

The Reports and Records Units in the Public Health Laboratories in Decatur, Albany and Waycross perform three essential functions:

1. Generating laboratory test result reports in electronic and paper formats.
2. Maintaining laboratory records and statistical data.
3. Serving as liaisons to clinicians, Public Health officials and the general public regarding test results.

Each GPHL location produces its own test result reports. Questions regarding reports should be directed to the location that performed the testing.

The Reports and Records Unit in the Decatur Laboratory reports laboratory findings for the majority of the tests performed at this location. To inquire about the status of a particular specimen, please contact the Reports and Records Unit at 404-321-2241. If testing has not been completed and reported, or if you have technical questions regarding the test, your call will be referred to the testing unit for further information.

**Please note: Test results will be provided only to the official submitter of record; we cannot release results to the patient or other health care provider that was not the submitter, with or without the patient's permission.**

Laboratory test records are retained by the Georgia Public Health Laboratory for two years and are then destroyed. The Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) requires that paper records are cross-cut shredded to ensure complete privacy. Electronic records are purged from the LIS. Duplicate copies of laboratory test reports can be provided upon request from the original submitting clinician with proper identification. All requests for more than five duplicate reports must be requested in writing.

For additional information about Reports and Records, please contact:

Decatur Laboratory:	404-321-2241
Albany Regional Laboratory	229-430-4122
Waycross Laboratory	912-338-7050

## LABORATORY SERVICES AND SUPPLY UNIT

The Laboratory Services and Supply Unit provides support services in the areas listed below to the Decatur, Albany and Waycross Public Health Laboratories. Additionally, employees in this unit assemble and distribute specimen collection outfits to customers of the Decatur Laboratory.

**Purchasing:** The Laboratory Services and Supply Manager oversees purchasing for all laboratory testing materials and reagents used in the three public health laboratories. These purchases are accomplished with state and federal funds, adhering to strict purchasing guidelines imposed by the Department of Administrative Services (DOAS or State Purchasing) and the Department of Public Health (DCH). This unit maintains a large supply warehouse to ensure availability of the items used by the GPL. This unit is also responsible for all of the agency contracts for equipment maintenance, reagents, and reagent/rental agreements.

**Mail Handling:** All incoming and outgoing mail is processed through the Service & Supply Unit. Incoming mail is processed through the new modular mail screening facility, sorted, and delivered to the appropriate areas. Outbound mail is processed twice daily to coincide with USPS pick-up schedules, and UPS packages are shipped daily.

**Shipping and Receiving:** All deliveries for the Decatur laboratory are received and signed for in the mail screening facility. Outgoing shipments are also prepared for shipment by the Services and Supply staff.

The Services & Supply Unit provides the courier service for the Decatur facility. This service is for deliveries between the laboratory and the state office and for other outbound deliveries. The GPL does not currently provide specimen pick-up service for our submitters.

The "Outfit Room" recycles used specimen shippers that have been sterilized and refurbishes them so that they may be used again. They also provide specimen collection outfits.

## SPECIMEN COLLECTION OUTFIT INFORMATION

<u>ITEM NO</u>	<u>TYPE TESTS</u>	<u>OUTFIT COMPONENTS</u>
<b>BACTERIOLOGY</b>		
505	Cultural Referral	1 - medium mailing can/lid 1 - biohazard transport bag 1 - absorbent packing paper 1 - requisition form #3410
555	Stool Culture	1 - short mailing can/lid 1 - biohazard transport bag 1 - vial preservative (Para-Pak) 1 - requisition form #3410
525	Pertussis	1 - short mailing can/lid 1 - biohazard transport bag 1 - slide holder w/2 glass-etched ring slides 1 - requisition form #3410
560	Streptococcus	1 - preaddressed #10 envelope #3547 1 - pack preservative (Dripaz) 1 - Self-seal HS Envelope 1 - cotton tip applicator 1 - requisition form # 3410
<b>MICROBIAL IMMUNOLOGY OUTFITS</b>		
500	Microbial Immunology with Blood Tubes	1 - medium mailing can/lid 1 - biohazard transport bag 1 - absorbent packing paper 1 - 5ml plastic blood collection tube 1 - requisition form #3432
501	Microbial Immunology without Blood Tubes	Same as #0500 without 5ml blood tube

## SPECIMEN COLLECTION OUTFIT INFORMATION

### MYCOBACTERIOLOGY (TB) OUTFITS

550	Sputum	1 - medium mailing can/lid 1 - biohazard transport bag 1 - absorbent packing paper 1 - 50ml conical tube 1 - requisition form #3412
585	Identification	1 - medium mailing can/lid 1 - biohazard transport bag 1 - absorbent packing paper 1 - requisition form #3412

### NEWBORN SCREENING OUTFITS

3491	Metabolic Disease	1 - 4 part snap-out form #3491 w/filter paper attached
3603	Mailing Envelope	1 - preaddressed envelope

### PARASITOLOGY OUTFITS

520	Intestinal Parasites/PVA	1 - tall mailing can/lid 1 - biohazard transport bag 1 - prepackaged kit (2 vials preservative) 2 - requisition forms #3414
521	Amebiasis/E. Histolytica PCR	1 - medium mailing can/lid 1 - biohazard transport bag 1 - 5% Potassium dichromate/absolute ethanol 1 - requisition form #3414
530	Pinworms	1 - preaddressed Kraft envelope #3602 1 - slide holder w/1 glass slide w/tape attached 1 - wooden depressor 1 - requisition form #3414
542	Blood Smears	1 - small mailing can/lid 1 - double slide holder w/2 glass slides 1 - requisition form #3414

## SPECIMEN COLLECTION OUTFIT INFORMATION

### VIROLOGY OUTFITS

515	HIV (AIDS)	1 - medium mailing can/lid 1 - biohazard transport bag 1 - absorbent packing paper 1 - 5ml plastic blood collection tube 1 - requisition form #3595R
575	Viral Culture**	1 - tall aluminum can/lid 1 - vial w/preservative 2 - 6" cotton swabs 1 - requisition form #3595R
565	Viral Load	1 - medium mailing can/lid #3570  1 - biohazard transport bag 1 - absorbent packing paper 1 - Vacutainer PPT - Tube 1 - 12 x 75mm tube

\*\* Shipping containers are NOT provided. Address to Virology Laboratory.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE COLLECTION, STORAGE AND TRANSPORT OF SPECIMENS ARE INCLUDED WITH EACH OUTFIT

## LABORATORY FEE

All private and public health care providers are required to pay \$10 fee for the following tests:

- HIV serology
- Hepatitis C serology
- Lead testing
- Syphilis serology (RPR and EIA)
- Syphilis serology by FTA
- Syphilis serology by VDRL

Note: Well water testing, offered in Albany and Waycross Public Health Laboratories, is charged at \$30/test.

Private healthcare providers are charged \$8/test for all the other tests listed in the “List of Laboratory Services,” payable by purchasing the laboratory fee stamps.

There will be no charge for all the tests performed for the followings:

- Surveillance of infectious diseases, when coordinated through the Epidemiology Branch.
- Routine testing for public health districts and county health departments.

## **LABORATORY INFORMATION SYSTEM**

The Georgia Public Health Laboratory IT infrastructure is managed by Public Health Information Technology group(PH/IT). The Laboratory Information Systems (LIS) Unit provides the support function for all of the information and data system needs at the GPHL. The Laboratory Information Systems are key elements of the laboratory for maintenance of precise records on all specimens that are handled by the laboratory. The Unit is staffed to cover the two major areas of responsibility. The first is the support, development and maintenance of the LIS. This responsibility involves the integration of the technical aspects of the laboratory operation with our Laboratory Information Management System (LIMS) that collects, displays and reports the tests performed on all specimens. The second responsibility concerns the installation, maintenance and enhancement of the physical devices (workstation, server, firewall etc) that are required to support the operation of the LIS.

The GPHL LIMS uses many technologies; the Web-based LIMS implementations require no special client-side installation, whereas the rich client LIMS requires implementation on a laboratory server. The Web-based technology includes multitier architecture which offers a high level of security (HTTPS, secured port) and privacy of laboratory data and users. It also offers users the opportunity to see the laboratory results in real time.

## **SCIENTIFIC SERVICES**

The Scientific Services Unit prepares microbiological culture media for the Central Laboratory in Decatur and Regional laboratories in Albany and Waycross.

Sterilization and biohazardous waste disposal for the entire Decatur facility are handled through the Scientific Services area. Glassware is also cleaned, sterilized and delivered to the labs.

On January 1, 2000, the Scientific Services Unit began fluoride proficiency testing for the DHR, Office of Oral Health. Each water system in Georgia that adjusts the fluoride level in drinking water is asked to participate in this proficiency testing. This work had previously been handled by the Environmental Protection Division of the Georgia Department of Natural Resources.