

**VALLEYCARE**  
**OLIVE VIEW-UCLA MEDICAL CENTER/HEALTH CENTERS**  
**POLICY & PROCEDURE**

**NUMBER: 243**  
**VERSION: 3**

**SUBJECT/TITLE:** CRITICAL VALUES OF TEST RESULTS

**POLICY:** All tests performed which result in a critical value will be reported to the responsible licensed caregiver in a timely manner.

**PURPOSE:** To ensure the timely treatment of patients with critical test results.

**DEPARTMENTS:** All

**DEFINITIONS:** **Critical value** - a value that represents a variance from normal as to be life threatening or have potential for significant harm unless some immediate action is taken. A "critical value" is one that is in the "Lower Range" defined in the attached table or in the "Upper Range" defined in the attached table

**Turnaround time** – the interval between receipt of the critical value in the lab and the receipt of the result by the responsible provider.

**PROCEDURE:** **Laboratory**

1. When a critical value is obtained and verified, the Clinical Laboratory Scientist will dispatch the report according to the location of specimen collection (See attached list of Critical Lab Values). Turnaround time for critical values is 20 minutes.
  - a. For a hospital inpatient report, the result is called to a licensed nurse on the patient's unit within 10 minutes. The nurse will contact the provider responsible for the care of the patient within 10 minutes.
  - b. For a patient in Emergency Department/Urgent Care (DEM/UC), the result is called to a DEM/UC physician.
  - c. If the physician is not available, the result will be given to a licensed nurse, who will then notify the provider. When UC is closed, the result is called to a DEM physician.
  - d. For a patient in an Olive View-UCLA Medical Center or Health Center clinic on day shift, the result is called to the clinic. If the requesting provider cannot be reached, the results will be given to a licensed nurse in the clinic who will then notify the provider.
  - e. For patients in an Olive View-UCLA Medical Center or Health Center clinic on evenings, nights, weekends, or holidays, or patients in Juvenile Hall, or Acton/Warm Springs, refer to Department of Pathology Specimen Collection Manual.

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- f. For patients whose lab was ordered from an Olive View-UCLA Medical Center or Health Center clinic, if the clinic is not in session the day of the critical value, the result is called to the Service Chief's office.
2. Critical values must be given to a licensed caregiver.
3. All critical values reported by the lab are documented in the lab Critical Result Report record immediately after the report is called.
4. All critical values reported by the lab are read back by the receiver of the result, and the read back is documented on the Critical Result Report.
5. Critical values received by a licensed nurse will be documented on the "Report of Critical Test Result" sticker (OV-2069).
6. When the licensed nurse calls the provider with the result, the provider will read the value back to the nurse for confirmation, and the nurse will document the read back on the "Report of Critical Result" sticker.

### **Radiology**

1. Results that require immediate notification (see attached Immediate Notification List of Imaging Diagnosis) are called to the referring physician or designated staff of the referring service or clinic within 60 minutes of critical result availability.
2. In the absence of the referring physician, the results will be reported to the Nurse Practitioner assigned.
3. A record of all imaging results that require immediate notification is to be maintained in log books and kept in each Radiology reading room. The name of the person informed, the date, the time, and the critical result are to be entered in the comments section of the log books.

**Cardiology** - The Division of Cardiology performs a variety of invasive and non-invasive tests on both hospitalized and non-hospitalized patients (inpatients and outpatients).

See attached Cardiology Div. Policy: Results Reporting, including Critical or Severe Abnormalities

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References: The Joint Commission, NPSG #2	
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