

Manitoba Health, Healthy Living & Seniors (MHLS) supports reporting and learning from patient safety events. The focus of a patient safety review is to closely look at the health care system that surrounds and interacts with those giving and receiving care. The goal is to identify risks to patient safety and recommend the most effective ways to minimize risk and improve the delivery of healthcare.

Patient Safety Learning Advisory

Delay in Receiving Laboratory Test Results

Summary:

A patient succumbed to sepsis due to a delay in receiving a positive blood culture result.

Keywords:

Sepsis

Device Name (if applicable):

Drug/Name/Fluid Name: (if applicable):

Type of Analysis: single event

Topic: Specimen/Laboratory

Findings of the Review:

Non-standardized and inconsistent reporting practices/process for critical lab values increased the likelihood of a delay in communication to the appropriate healthcare provider which further delayed time to treatment.

Limited orientation regarding roles and responsibility for communicating critical lab test results increased the likelihood that there would be a delay in communication to the appropriate healthcare provider.

System Learning:

Utilize a standardized process for communicating critical lab results from the originating lab directly to the clinician/designate that is responsible for the patient's care.

Review current practice of Lab Technicians' involvement in critical test result reporting and revise Policy & Procedure accordingly.

Develop provincial education material for Lab Technicians/Technologists regarding reporting of critical lab values.

Develop a general site orientation program/process for Lab Technicians.

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