



# Drive better patient care by focusing on 3 key areas

## *Advice from medical experts*

As patient care becomes more dynamic with the occurrence of COVID-19 and the rising cases of chronic conditions in the US, providers need more resources and information at the point-of-care to help drive better patient care. We held a series of medical insight sessions including providers from across the spectrum of care including health systems, national urgent care chain, community hospitals, central labs and physician offices. In these insight sessions, we found three areas medical experts are focusing on to help drive better patient care:

<b>Sending out to lab</b>		<b>Point-of-care</b>
	<p><b>Point-of-care</b> respiratory assays give <b>accurate results</b> more quickly than sending tests to a lab</p>	
2 – 5 days <sup>1</sup>		10 minutes – 1 hour <sup>2</sup>



**1 | Comprehensive point-of-care testing**



**2 | Operational adjustments to meet patient preference**



**3 | Preventative care plans for long term patient health**

**1 | Comprehensive point-of-care testing**  
*Install treatment plans to help promote better outcomes and higher patient compliance*

With an increasing focus on patient outcomes, today’s provider is looking for ways to improve efficiencies and get patients the results they need faster. In-office laboratory testing offers a solution to both challenges, enabling physicians to more immediately install treatment plans based on test results. In our insight sessions, the Medical Director for a large national urgent care chain put it as, “Rapid tests have proved valuable in helping providers determine next steps.” The need for results at the point-of-care leads many providers to bring testing in house. A concern with sending tests out to reference labs was seen with early COVID-19 testing, where some patients faced up wait times up to two weeks<sup>3</sup>.

One physician called out the benefit of lab tests for understanding a patient who may be at risk to COVID-19, influenza and other healthcare complications, stating that the, “Combination of regular chemistry tests (LDH, CRP, procalcitonin, D-dimer, urea creatinine ratio) may help predict ‘at risk’ patients in the future”.

**These medical insight sessions reinforced the value of point-of-care testing, where a provider can:**

- Send patients home with same-day results and treatment plan
- Prescribe accurate treatment for many conditions and avoid unnecessary antibiotics
- Help reduce hospitalizations with correct diagnoses the first time

Get more information about lab testing here. [➔](#)

**2 | Operational adjustments to meet patient preference**  
*Office efficiencies take Center Stage During the Pandemic*

Drive through testing, back door ‘sick’ entrances, parking lot waiting rooms and several telehealth platforms, we heard it all from our medical experts during the insight sessions. Discussions among medical experts are balanced between addressing new guidelines on infection prevention and managing telehealth tools, all while assuring patient experiences are positive.

A [recent survey by Kyruus](#) showcased this when they found that nearly three-quarters of respondents engaged in their first virtual care visit ever during the initial surge of COVID-19 cases in the United States and over 75% were very or completely satisfied with their virtual care experiences. A key point to consider is the opportunity providers have, to enhance patient experience, acquisition, and retention by making virtual care scheduling and follow-up more seamless. This includes the communication of lab test results.

Before COVID-19, a study found that 37% of patients who reported that a provider failed to meet their expectations cited “inability to receive lab results in the same visit” as the chief reason for their dissatisfaction<sup>4</sup>. While providers are ensuring they meet new standards for seeing patients safely, point-of-care lab testing should not be overlooked. A physician advisor in our sessions made his point of view clear, stating, “COVID has highlighted incredible importance of patient testing, and the need for an overall increase in point of care testing.” His point connects the value of getting actionable information at the point-of-care to operating efficiency in a manner that provides better care and increases patient satisfaction.

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We understand caring for patients in the time of COVID-19 has unique challenges. Access guidance and resources caring for a diverse patient population, including telehealth resources, patient engagement tools and more by visiting resource pages for [Navigating Your Path Through COVID-19](#), [Laboratory Testing Resources](#) and infection prevention best practices webpages.

#### Sources:

1. <https://www.labcorp.com/content/how-soon-can-i-expect-receive-my-lab-test-results>
2. <https://www.cdc.gov/flu/symptoms/testing.htm>
3. <https://khn.org/news/states-search-for-ways-to-deal-with-covid-19-testing-backlogs/>
4. HIDA, Horizon Report, Patient Satisfaction 2016

## 3

### Preventative care plans for long term patient health

*The Importance of Understanding your Healthy Patient Reaps Long Term Satisfaction and Results*

Another area discussed from our medical expert panel was the importance of preventative care for long-term patient health. Some studies [such as this one](#) by the JAMA Network cite the important correlations of key blood tests to understanding a patients health currently and their potential risk to contracting COVID-19. If doctors pay attention to the measure, researchers say, they could use it to identify patients with greater risk for more severe diseases. The same risk applies for many healthcare complications. This study represents an area of focus for providers which is connected to the important utilization of lab testing.

COVID-19 has emphasized the importance of lab testing for long-term patient help. Providers are turning to physician office lab testing to better manage their growing patient population with chronic medical conditions. By doing so, practices are also positioning themselves to flourish under value-based care programs and quality payment programs that reward practices for keeping patients as healthy as possible and out of costly hospital emergency rooms.

[Click here to read more about how physician office lab testing enhances chronic care management](#)



### Conclusion

In this dynamic time of caring for patients, now is the time for organizations to ensure their lab testing strategies are supporting better patient outcomes clinically and operationally. While this has been important, COVID-19 has emphasized its critical role to the long-term health and satisfaction of patients.