



Petersburg Medical Center

Laboratory Report July 2024

Workforce Wellness

One Medical Technologist position remains vacant, and with the upcoming transition of one Lab Assistant to Home Health, a Lab Assistant position has been posted as well.

The two staff members currently enrolled in online programs continue to make progress toward their degrees. We hope the “grow our own” pathway for the Laboratory will ensure local, long-term sustainability for staffing.

Community Engagement

Every three years the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation (ADEC) conducts a 2-day inspection reviewing all testing and procedural documentation, and observing testing personnel who perform water microbiology testing. In April, the Lab passed its Water Micro Inspection with zero findings. The PMC laboratory provides water quality testing for potable, pool, and cannery sources for Petersburg and Wrangell.

Patient Centered Care

Lab will be interfacing the Point of Care Clinitek in the Joy Janssen Clinic over the next few weeks. Currently all ten urine dipstick results are entered by hand by the Medical Assistants. It is a time-consuming task for the MAs. Once the instrument is interfaced, results will automatically upload to the patient’s chart, allowing the MAs to be more efficient and return to patient care faster.

Facility

Temperatures in the lab are very difficult to control, especially when the temperature outside gets above 65°F. Laboratory equipment must be maintained within a specific temperature range, and the current facility’s environmental control system must be modulated by Facilities personnel since changes made to the cooling system impacts other departments and patients. The Facilities crew have done an excellent job of adjusting the cooling system in the lab as needed, but we look forward to a new facility that is able to automatically compensate and adjust for the heat the equipment gives off when it is running.

Financial Wellness

The Lab and Ancillary Registration staff continue to work together on streamlining the prior authorization process so patients do not have to wait as long to get their laboratory work done. Most insurance companies require prior authorization for certain laboratory tests, and if they are not done prior to the blood draw, the patient can end up having to pay entirely out of pocket. The prior auth process can be slow and lengthy depending on the insurance company, so we are working hard to create an efficient workflow on our side so prior authorizations don’t become a barrier to our patients receiving care.

Submitted by: Violet Shimek, MLS (ASCP)^{CM}
