Alberta Health Services

LAB RESULTS REVIEW & REPORTING PROJECT

PATIENTS DISCHARGED *with* LABS STILL PENDING

MANAGING LAB RESULTS USING SCM CRITERIA-BASED LISTS

A process for the Individual Physician Practice

INTRODUCTION

In a single year, there were **over 180,000 lab results** returned after patients were discharged from hospitals within the Calgary Zone. **Nearly 1 in 5** (19.1%) of these were classified as "abnormal," and the true number is likely higher because it does not include tests that cannot be flagged, such as pathology reports.

It was recognized by medical staff that a reliable and easy method is needed for tracking these pending lab tests in order to optimize safety and continuity of care for patients. The Lab Results Review & Reporting (LR^3) project has worked with a number of stakeholders to develop processes to ensure the lab tests that you ordered (and are therefore responsible for) can be reliably tracked.

One feature in SCM is the **Criteria-Based List** – an example of this is the default "*Discharged Patients Past 30 Days, Me Attending*" list. A criteria-based list is automatically populated based on defined search criteria. This document shows you how to use this type of list to manage pending results, which has the advantage that many physicians are already familiar with it. (For those who like even *more* reliability and control, LR^3 recommends another process that uses Special Lists; full instructions are available at www.ahs.ca/LR3.)

Some care teams within the Calgary Zone are working as a group to manage results; this is particularly helpful during transitions when the ordering provider goes off-service or on vacation. A separate guide is available to describe how to set up a team-based follow-up process – visit www.ahs.ca/LR3 for more.

WHY?

Patients who are discharged from hospital with pending lab results are at risk because clinically important results can go unnoticed (e.g., a positive screen for a bacterial infection). Discharged patients typically do not remain on a care provider's SCM Patient List, and therefore any flags for new results are not seen in a timely way. This problem has led to adverse events for patients within the Calgary Zone, and is also a concern within other healthcare organizations.

NOT JUST LABS!

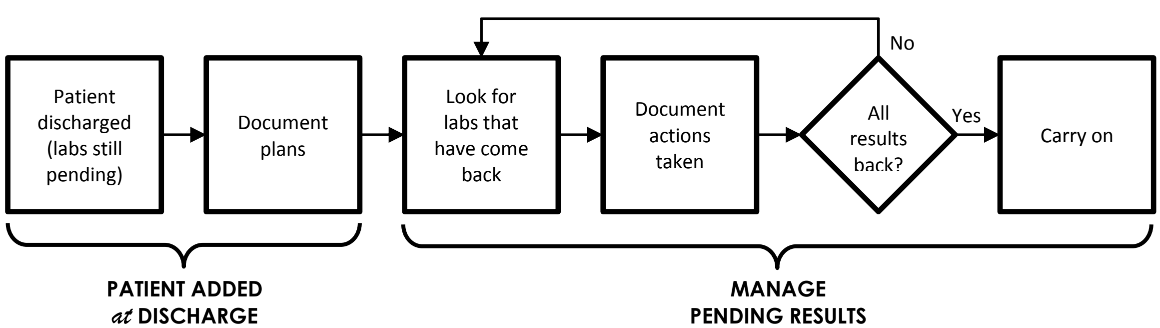
SCM special lists can also be used to track pending results from Diagnostic Imaging tests!

GOING PAPERLESS

Lab printing may be stopping or may have already stopped in your area. Therefore the only one who will follow up on your pending results is *you*.

HIGH-LEVEL OVERVIEW *of the* PROCESS USING SCM LISTS

The diagram below shows the process in its simplest form. The pages that follow show you step-by-step how to set up and manage this system. There is also a process described on page 4 that describes how to hand-off your list to a colleague when you go off-service or away on vacation.



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SETTING UP *your* CRITERIA-BASED LIST

The first step is to set up your **Discharged Patients List**. By default, there is already a list in your profile called "*Discharged Patients Past 30 Days, Me Attending*" which you can use or modify to fit your situation, or you can create a new list from scratch.

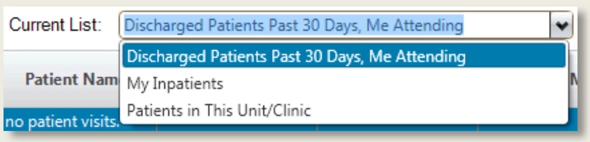
1. SET UP *your* CRITERIA-BASED LIST

If you find the existing search parameters for the "*Discharged Patients Past 30 Days, Me Attending*" list are perfectly suitable to your needs, you can skip to the next page.

If, however, you feel the search criteria could better fit your needs, you can either modify the existing list, or create a new criteria-based list from scratch.

To modify an existing criteria-based list:

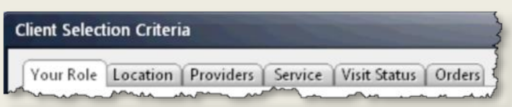
1. Select the list from the **Current List** drop-down menu.



2. Click the **Modify Visit List** icon. The Client Selection Criteria window will pop up.

To create a new criteria-based list:

1. Click the **New Visit List** icon. The Client Selection Criteria window will pop up.



Warning: Patients will disappear from a list once they no longer fit the search criteria. For example, if your list is set to 30 days, a patient will stop appearing on day 31, even if there are results still pending.

For a more robust and reliable process, please see the recommended LR³ individual process that uses Special Lists, available at www.ahs.ca/LR3.

Warning: Without the *exact* matching criteria, patients will not appear on your list and you might not even know it.

For example, with the "*Discharged Patients Past 30 Days, Me Attending*" list, only patients that were discharged while your name was attached as the attending physician will appear. If at the time of discharge there is a transfer of care, or if you ordered a test as a consultant, the patient will *not* show up on your list.

For a more robust and reliable process, please see the recommended LR³ individual process that uses Special Lists, available at www.ahs.ca/LR3.

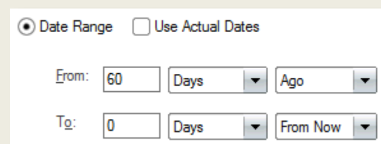
2. MODIFY *the* SEARCH CRITERIA

Several options are available for modifying a criteria-based list. You can narrow the search according to your role or to a specific location, provider or service. You can also limit the results to the visit's status (which is already set to "Discharged" if you are using the default criteria-based list) and to specified orders (e.g., DI or lab orders; completed or pending status).

The most common alteration to the default discharged patients list is to increase the number of days searched.

To increase/decrease the number of days:

1. Click the Visit Status tab.
2. Under **Date Range** next to **From:**, enter the number of days back from today you want the list to search (e.g., 30, 60, 90).



3. Click **OK**.
4. Edit the name of the list to reflect the change (e.g., change "Past 30 Days" to "Past 60 Days") and click **OK**. Keep the list's name the same to overwrite the list.
5. If you change the list's name, you will be prompted to **Rename** the current list (i.e., replace it), or create a **New List**.

Warning: Expanding the search criteria will result in more patients appearing in the list. Parameters that are too loose will yield lists that are difficult to manage, while parameters that are too restrictive might not include all the patients that should be followed.

3. TEST *your* CRITERIA-BASED LIST

You will want to thoroughly test your **Discharged Patients List** to make sure *all* expected patients are appearing. If a patient you think should be there isn't showing, then the search parameters need to be adjusted.

MANAGING PENDING RESULTS

The list can be reviewed at any time interval. New lab results that arrived since the last time you checked your list will be flagged and easily seen here.

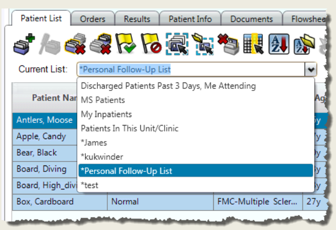
1. DOCUMENT *your* PLANS

Prior to discharge, consider leaving an annotation on the pending lab order. You can use this note to remind yourself of your plans, or you can use it to communicate to another physician in case the result comes back while you are off-service. See step 4 below on how to add an annotation.

2. CHECK *your* LIST

Periodically look at your **Discharged Patients List** to see if any flags have appeared indicating the arrival of new results. Depending on the nature of the labs ordered, you may want to check your list weekly or twice a week.

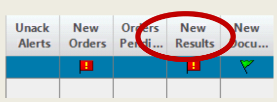
1. Select your **Discharged Patients List** from the **Current List** drop-down menu.



3. SELECT *a* PATIENT *and* VIEW RESULTS

You will see a flag for a patient indicating that new results have been received since the flag was last acknowledged for this patient. An abnormal flag will appear if a result falls outside the normal range.

1. Look for new results in the **New Results** column.



   Note: Flags need to be turned **on** for this to function properly. Click Select All Patients and then to turn your flags on.

2. To review the results, double click on the flag.

   or

   From your list, click on a patient to select them and then click on the Results tab to view results.

   While on the Results tab, you can cycle through the patients on your list by using the two arrows at the top:

Note: Not all lab tests will generate an abnormal flag, so do *not* rely on these alone to alert you to clinically significant results. For instance, Pathology, Diagnostic Imaging, Genetics and many others will *not* get flagged as abnormal.

4. CLEAR FLAGS *and/or* ANNOTATE

Make sure you clear the New Results flag(s) so that you can easily spot the results that will have arrived the next time you check your **Discharged Patients List**. You can also add an annotation to provide information to your colleague about your intended follow-up plans for a lab result.

To clear your flags:

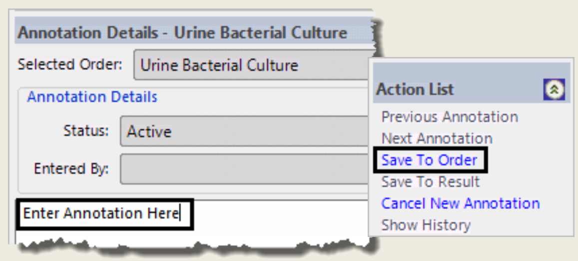
1. Double-click on the **New Results** flag.
2. Review the orders—previously entered orders will also appear here.
3. Click Clear Flag

To add an annotation:

1. Select the patient's Results tab. Results will appear once the sample has been collected; it will show "<Result is Pending>"
2. Select the result name, click the icon and then click "Add to Chart…"

   or

   Right-click on the result name and select **Annotations > Add to Chart**.
3. Enter the annotation in the free text field and select "Save to Order."



Note: Ensure that the **order** is selected. An annotation cannot be saved to a result; this ensures that all annotations are available to view in one place.

Warning: A criteria-based list *cannot* be altered.

- If there is a specific patient you want to follow, you will not be able to add them manually to this list.
- Once you have dealt with a patient's pending lab results, you will not be able to remove their name by hand. This can clutter up your screen with extra names and camouflage the real patients of interest.

For more control over your list, please see the recommended LR^3 individual process that uses Special Lists, available at www.ahs.ca/LR3.

HAND-OFF *for* VACATIONS, WEEKENDS, *etc.*

At times, you may expect important results to arrive while you are away. Unfortunately, SCM lists cannot be shared between users. The following steps can ensure continuity of care for your patients.

Print your **Discharged Patients List** for your colleague → Colleague adds patients to their **Personal Follow-Up List** → Colleague annotates on lab orders as they return → Upon return, check your list for annotations on labs for these patients → Indicate to colleague that those patients can be removed from their **Personal Follow-Up List**

1. PRINT *your* DISCHARGE LIST

At present, there is no way to transfer your list electronically to a colleague. You will have to print a copy of your **Discharged Patients List** and physically hand it to the person covering for you while you are off-service.

1. Select the **Discharged Patients List** from the **Current List** drop-down menu.
2. Click the printer icon .
3. From the **Report Selection** window that appears, select "Patient Lists" from the **Report Category** dropdown list.

   Report Category: Patient Lists

4. Choose a report such as "Patient Demographic Report" or "Current Summary Patient List," then click the **Print** button.

If your colleague wishes to set up their own process for tracking pending results, instructions for setting up a **Personal Follow-Up List** can be found on the AHS website at: http://www.albertahealthservices.ca/LR3

2. REVIEW *your* LIST

When you're back on-service, you can check to see if any results have come back and any notes your colleague has left.

On a patient's **Results Tab**, once an annotation has been added, an icon will appear in the result banner. Hover over the icon to reveal the last annotation, or follow these steps to view all annotations for an order.

1. Select a patient from your **Discharged Patients List**.
2. Click on the Results tab.
3. Any order with the icon indicates annotations exist for that order.
   a. Select any result under that order. Right-click on the result and select **Annotations > Annotation Details** from the pop-up menu.

   or

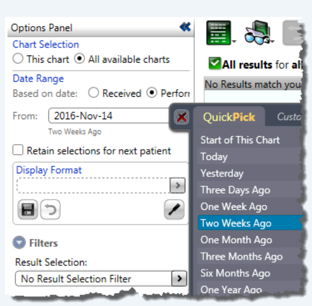
   b. Click the icon.

Warning: If it has been more than 30 days since discharge, the patient will drop off your list. Consider setting up a personal Special List so as not to miss these patients (see the LR^3 webpage for more at www.ahs.ca/LR3).

TIPS *for* SEARCHING LAB RESULTS

SET *the* DATE RANGE

The default view in the Results tab may not go back far enough to view results ordered a long time ago. In the Options Panel, use the dropdown QuickPick feature to set the date range to one, three or six months ago (or longer!) to display older orders.



SET *the* SEARCH FILTER

Lab orders with pending results may not appear by default. Check the "Include pending" option under the filters in the Options Panel. If you previously added an annotation to a lab order, you can also filter by "Annotated only" to further narrow the results.