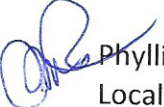


NC DEPARTMENT OF
**HEALTH AND
HUMAN SERVICES**

ROY COOPER • Governor
MANDY COHEN, MD, MPH • Secretary
DANNY STALEY • Director, Division of Public Health

MEMORANDUM

To: Local Nursing Directors and Nurse Supervisors

From:  Phyllis M. Rocco, MPH, BSN, RN, Chief Public Health Nurse and Branch Head,
Local Technical Assistance Branch

Subject: Follow-up of Abnormal Test results

Date: July 31, 2018

Due to many local requests, I have prepared the guidance below re: Follow-up of Abnormal Labs, Pap Smears and other abnormal test results. Prior to releasing this guidance, I also sought input from the Snowden Company from whom most of you receive your agency's medical malpractice insurance. The following reflects our joint guidance. NOTE: *If DPH programmatic guidelines have stricter requirements or more specific abnormal test follow-up guidance please follow program specific guidance.*

Follow-up of Abnormal Labs, Pap Smears and other abnormal test results

Managing test results effectively is vital to quality patient care; failure to follow up on test results can lead to patient harm.

Appropriate follow-up measures should be taken to ensure continuity of care for:

1. Patients who have abnormal test results
2. Patients who have been referred to other providers
3. Patient who have missed return appointments

Staff shall make a minimum of three attempts to notify patients of abnormal PAP smear or other tests results as follows:

1. Initial contact may be made by telephone if the number is available and patient has permitted home contact.
 - a. Never text abnormal test results
 - b. Arrange for any needed re-test, treatments or referral appointments while you have the client on the phone.

NC DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES • DIVISION OF PUBLIC HEALTH

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AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY / AFFIRMATIVE ACTION EMPLOYER

- c. Send a memo to the client affirming your discussion and instructions. Make sure the client agrees to any referrals outside your agency.
2. The second contact should be a regular mailed letter with directions for the patient to contact the health center for follow-up.
3. The third should be a certified or registered letter with directions for the patient to contact the health center for follow-up.
 - a. If letter comes back unopened/undeliverable note that in the medical record, scan picture of letter, signed receipt for us postal service and envelop into client's medical record.
4. If the patient cannot be contacted by the above measures, a home visit is strongly recommended for results that are potentially life threatening.
5. If after three attempts are made with no response or three appointments are made and not kept by the patient, the health center provider should document in the chart that the patient is lost to follow-up care.

6. Document in the medical record if the client has been lost to follow-up care and file is now closed to services

- Should you have clients that require health care beyond what your agency can provide:
- assist the client in obtaining an appointment
 - document all conversations and appointments made in the client's record.
 - make sure the client agrees to the time and date of the appointment (do not assume that just because you send an appointment to the client that it is acceptable)
 - Confirm with the client that they understand the purpose of the referral and that they agree to date and time.
 - Should the client fail to keep the referral appointments 2-3 times, based on the referral provider policy the client is referred to, the LHD may discharge the client from service via certified letter for non-compliance with follow-up care for xxxxxx condition.
 - Please state in the discharge letter the client is now responsible for their own care. SEND THIS LETTER CERTIFIED and keep a copy in the client's record.

Cc:	Terrie Snowden Local Health Directors Beth Lovette	Chris Hoke Danny Staley DPH Section Chiefs	DPH Nurse Consultants
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