

Proficiency Testing Information

Proficiency testing is used by clinical laboratories to verify the accuracy and reliability of their tests. To do this, the laboratory enrolls with proficiency testing services that have been approved by the California Department of Public Health and the Federal government. The laboratory also directs the proficiency testing services to release the report of the laboratory's testing to Laboratory Field Services, California Department of Public Health.

In proficiency testing, the laboratory tests specimens whose expected value is not known to the testing laboratory but is known by the proficiency testing service. After the laboratory submits the results of the testing to the proficiency testing service, the laboratory's result is compared with other laboratories' results that use the same or similar testing equipment and reagents. The proficiency testing service scores the laboratory's performance by comparing their results with the targeted value. Laboratory personnel may then evaluate the accuracy of their testing and take corrective action if their results are not acceptable.

Currently, proficiency testing is performed three times per year (trimesters) with five specimens to test per analyte.

To obtain specific information about proficiency testing requirements or regulatory issues about proficiency testing, please contact Patricia Toomer at (510) 620-3825.

Approved Proficiency Testing Services for California Clinical Laboratories

Accutest (DigitalPt)	800-665-2575	www.digitalpt.com
American Academy of Family Physicians	800-274-7911	www.aafp.org/pt/ptcentral
American Association of Bioanalysts	800-234-5315	www.aab-pts.org
American Proficiency Institute	800-333-0958	www.api-pt.com
California Thoracic Society	714-730-1944	www.thoracic.org/ca.html
College of American Pathologists	800-323-4040	www.cap.org
Medical Laboratory Evaluation	800-338-2746	www.acponline.org/mle
Wisconsin State Laboratory of Hygiene	800-462-5261	http://www.wslhpt.org