

Introduction to the National Pathology Standard

The National Pathology Standard (Pathology Standard) aims to protect the public from harm and improve the quality of pathology services. It describes a consistent framework that pathology practices providing Medicare benefit services must meet.

About the National Pathology Standard

There are 11 standard topics, each with a consumer outcome:

1. Clinical Governance

Patients and carers are confident that the pathology practice is organised, efficient and effective and that the outcomes of their pathology services will result in safe, appropriate, high-quality healthcare decisions.

2. Safety and quality systems

Patients and carers expect pathology practices to have safety and quality systems that support and improve pathology services, that ensure timely, accurate results that support their healthcare providers' decision-making.

The pathology practice seeks, listens to and addresses patient feedback.

3. Pathology test supervision

Patients expect a qualified and skilled member of the pathology workforce to supervise the testing of their specimens.

4. Pathology laboratory supervision

Patients expect that, regardless of which pathology service processes their specimens or where testing takes place, all procedures will be appropriately supervised, and the results will be accurate.

5. Workforce performance and effectiveness

Patients expect a competent workforce to undertake their pathology services.

6. Partnering with Consumers

Patients receive a person-centred specimen collection. Specimen collectors respect the patient's healthcare rights, incorporate the patient's perspectives into the collection process, and obtain informed consent to collect the specimen.

7. Communicating for safety

Pathology practices communicate with requesters, healthcare providers and patients to ensure patients receive safe and high-quality care.

8. Medical devices

Patients expect their pathology services to be undertaken with reliable medical devices that provide accurate results.

9. Specimen collection

Patients expect to be informed about how to prepare for providing a specimen, to have their specimens identified as belonging to them, and to have their specimens correctly collected and stored in preparation for testing, so that accurate laboratory testing is assured.

10. Specimen testing

Patients expect pathology practices to competently test their specimens and report results accurately.

11. Point of care testing

Patients are confident that the pathology practice has effectively embedded point of care testing into clinical governance and safety and quality systems, so the trained workforce delivers test results that support high-quality healthcare decisions.

Assessing against the National Pathology Standard

To deliver Medicare benefit services, pathology practices must be accredited against the National Pathology Standard. Accreditation demonstrates that a pathology practice provides safe, high-quality services, minimises risks, and improves processes and efficiency. Patients can be confident that accredited practices are committed to delivering and improving safety and quality.

Development of the National Pathology Standard

The Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care (the Commission) developed the National Pathology Standard in collaboration with the Australian, state and territory governments, consumers, pathology practices and practitioners, professional bodies and pathology experts.

For more information

Please visit safetyandquality.gov.au/pathology

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