NC DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
Division of Public Health

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Memo

To: Submitters of Clinical Specimens to the North Carolina State Laboratory of Public Health

From: Scott M. Shone, PhD, HCLD (ABB), Director, State Laboratory of Public Health

Date: January 15, 2025

Re: Revised Specimen Requirements for Blood Lead Testing

The North Carolina State Laboratory of Public Health (NCSLPH) is implementing changes to the clinical specimen submission, packaging, and shipping procedures and policies for blood lead testing.

Effective January 22, 2025, the NCSLPH is revising the acceptance criteria for capillary and venous blood lead specimens to fourteen (14) days from the date of collection to testing for capillary and venous specimens stored and transported to the laboratory at ambient (15 to 38°C) temperatures. Ambient temperature is the preferred storage and transport temperature for blood lead specimens. For storage and transport of blood lead specimens at cold (2 to 8°C) or frozen (-15 to -25°C) temperatures, please see Appendix A in SCOPE: A Guide to Laboratory Services for guidance. Specimens received outside of the required acceptance criteria after January 22, 2025 will be rejected for blood lead testing.

Providers should not batch specimens over multiple days for shipment. All specimens submitted to NCSLPH must be labeled with two patient identifiers that exactly match information submitted on a completed DHHS form 3707 BloodLead_NPI_V11_Insur (5028 - Activated, VersiForm) (ncdhhs.gov).

Pre-paid shipping boxes are available for all providers submitting blood lead specimens who do not use the NC DOA Medical Courier. These pre-paid shipping boxes may be ordered from the NCSLPH website: https://slphreporting.dph.ncdhhs.gov/labportal. Local Health Departments should continue to use the current blood lead specimen bags for transport of blood lead specimens through the NC DOA Medical Courier in accordance with current policies and procedures.

These changes to the Blood Lead clinical specimen acceptance criteria reflect a quality improvement initiative to help assure accurate and reliable test results. If you have any questions, please contact the NCSLPH Customer Service team at 919-733-3937 or check the NCSLPH website N.C. DPH: State Lab > Hemachemistry (ncdhhs.gov) for additional guidance.