NCSLPH New Specimen Transport Process FAQs June 2023

1.0 General Information		
#	**Question**	**Answer**
1.1	Where can I find more information about the new specimen transport process?	A 1-pager with pertinent information on new submission processes is available on our homepage: NCSLPH DOA Medical Courier Packing and Shipping Guidance
1.2	Where can I find the webinar slide show?	The slides shared on the new specimen submission process are available at: DOA Medical Courier Tutorial
1.3	When does the new Medical Courier go live?	The go live date for new specimen transportation process is 07/10/23.
1.4	Who should I contact regarding Medical Courier pickup?	Please communicate all medical courier logistics related questions to Howie Wise at 984-236-7160. Questions regarding packaging, testing, or processing should be communicated to NCSLPH customer service at 919-733-3937, or Regional Consultants: Tracey Shives (336-306-4302), April Ponder (828-289-8519), Karen Wall (910-322-8120), or Linda Cleve (252-414-3078).
1.5	What are the scheduled pick up times for local health departments?	The medical courier will give you the scheduled time by July 7, 2023. Your final pick-up time may change during the launch period, but you will be notified of the final established pickup time for your facility.
1.6	Will this courier impact our monthly expense for courier cost?	DOA Medical Courier service is free of charge for LHDs.
1.7	Will we get results or reports from the new courier?	No, the DOA Medical Courier will only transport specimens/samples to NCSLPH for testing. They only ship one direction to SLPH. Continue to use MSC for state mail, reports, supplies, etc. Results are also available through CELR.
2.0 Old Submission Process		
#	**Question**	**Answer**
2.1	What differs from the old submission process?	The only changes are who picks up (DOA Medical Courier), when they pick up, and dry ice is no longer needed for transport.
3.0 Weekend and Holiday Schedules		
#	**Question**	**Answer**
3.1	Can specimens collected Friday afternoon be frozen and sent Monday?	Please reference the NCSLPH Specimen Storage and Shipping Guidelines or SCOPE document to ensure that the specimen type(s) collected can be received frozen. Place the specimens with requisitions together into a courier bag labeled “Keep Frozen” and place in the freezer until the courier arrives on Monday.
3.2	Can we use Saturday pickup for specimens?	No. UPS will not be providing Saturday pickup services.
3.3	How will specimen shipping work around holidays?	DOA Medical Courier will pick up from all sites according to the State/county holiday schedule. A memo will be sent prior to each holiday to detail operating schedule. If specimens need to be frozen over the holidays, please refer to line 3.1 for guidance.
4.0 Packing and Shipping		
#	**Question**	**Answer**
4.1	What do we do if we run out of State-supplied courier/labels bags?	Supplies can be ordered through the Supply Ordering Portal.

4.2	Is there a maximum number of specimens that can be placed in a courier bag?	The number of specimens placed in the courier bag should be limited to an amount that will allow the bag to securely close.
4.3	Do we need to put only one specimen and requisition form in one bag?	Specimen bags should contain one specimen to be tested for one test. However, for CT/GC testing, the SLPH will accept multiple specimens from the same patient that are collected from different anatomical sites in one specimen bag.
4.4	Do submitting organizations need to purchase their own dry ice or will the State supply this if needed?	Dry ice is no longer required for specimen transport if using the DOA Medical Courier. The DOA Medical Courier has a freezer onboard transport vehicles for frozen specimen transport. The SLPH will not provide dry ice for the shipment of specimens if the submitter is not using the DOA Medical Courier.
4.5	Should we ship specimens the same day as collected or next day?	Specimens should be shipped as soon as possible after collection. If specimens are collected prior to DOA Medical Courier arrival, specimens should be prepared for pick up by the courier on the same day. For specimens collected on Fridays after the courier has picked up specimens, or for storage over a holiday, depending on the testing to be performed on the specimens, the specimen should be stored (room temperature (15-25°C), cold (2-8°C) or frozen (<-20°C) according to NCSLPH Clinical Specimen Storage and Shipping Guidelines until the next courier pickup. See line 3.1 for more information on frozen specimens.
4.6	Will we no longer place specimens into the SLPH mailbox?	Correct. Only rabies will go to the MSC state courier drop box. All others will be hand delivered to the medical courier.
4.7	Will MSC mailbox continue to be used?	Yes, MSC is still picking up and dropping off mail, reports, supplies, etc. to LHDs. The only difference is that all specimens/samples for testing at NCSLPH will now be transported from LHD to NCSLPH by the DOA Medical Courier. If clinical specimens inadvertently get sent to NCSLPH via MSC (mail), if packaged improperly or there is a delay getting to the State Lab, specimens may be rejected because they do not meet temperature and/or time requirements for testing. We are using a medical courier to reduce the number of rejected specimens.

5.0 Specific Tests		
#	**Question**	**Answer**
5.1	What do we do with hemoglobin electrophoresis and blood spot tests?	**Dried blood spot specimens collected on the Newborn Screening (NBS) filter paper card** should be collected and dried per instructions on the NCSLPH website and in the SCOPE document. Specimens should be shipped within 24 hours of collection. UPS Overnight Air Delivery is the preferred method of shipping. NCSLPH provides all NBS submitters the opportunity to enroll in the UPS CampusShip program. For more information regarding enrollment please contact Jennifer.tawes@dhhs.nc.gov or call 919-807-8938. **Dried blood spot specimens collected on the Hemoglobin Screening filter paper card** should be dried per instructions on the NCSLPH website and in the SCOPE document and the specimens should be submitted to the NCSLPH using DOA Medical Courier. Dried blood spot specimens will be rejected if received > 14 days post collection.
5.2	How should we ship blood lead specimens?	Blood lead specimens submitted through the local health departments can now be sent via the DOA Medical Courier. Specimen bags can be placed in room temperature courier bags (they do not need to be boxed). Other facilities submitting blood lead specimens should continue to box their specimens and ship them via the State DOA Courier at ambient temperature for receipt at the SLPH within 28 days of collection.
5.3	Are there any changes to submitting environmental health animal specimens for rabies testing?	Shipping rabies specimens remains the same. Continue to use the same packaging and send them to NCSLPH through MSC state drop box, UPS, or Animal Control. Do not send Rabies specimens via the DOA Medical Courier.
5.4	Will TB still go into cans?	Yes, TB will go into the same individual packaging. Cans themselves will be placed into the large courier bags at appropriate temperature (refer to SCOPE for specifics on temperature).
5.5	Are herpes cultures still shipped in boxes?	Herpes cultures can be sent in the courier bags and do not need to be boxed. Please refer to the revised packaging guidelines one pager on our website for specifics.
5.6	How do viral cultures and GC plates get sent to SLPH?	These samples are shipped individually packaged in a CLEAR bag, following the revised DOA Medical Courier Packaging and Shipping Guidelines on our website. Maintain cultures and plates at appropriate temperature and ship in the large courier bags. These samples do not need to be individually boxed.
5.7	Do water samples from environmental health (like well water) need to be packed in boxes?	Continue to ship environmental water samples through the MSC state courier drop box with the same packaging, OR DOA Medical Courier will pick up environmental samples if they are at the local health department when the DOA Medical Courier arrives. DOA Medical Courier will only pick up from local health departments.



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