

Memorandum of Understanding

The following constitutes an agreement between the parties of the VA Puget Sound Health Care System (VAPSHCS) at all locations, and the American Federation of Government Employees (AFGE), AFL-CIO National VA Council #53 (NVAC), AFGE Local 498, and AFGE Local 3197, concerning the revised GS-0645-05 Medical Technician Performance Standards for the Seattle and American Lake campuses at VAPSHCS who work within Pathology and Laboratory Medicine Service (P&LMS). Hereinafter "Management" and the "Union" are referred to as the parties.

1. The parties agree that the obligation to bargain due to the National Demand to Bargain dated May 11, 2018 has been fulfilled during the June 8, 2018 meeting at the Seattle campus where the parties met to determine appropriate arrangements and procedures for the revised GS-0645-05 Medical Technician Performance Standards.
2. The revised GS-0645-05 Medical Technician Performance Standards can be communicated in writing to the bargaining unit employees beginning today and no later than five business days from the date this MOU is signed unless an employee is not available due to a previously approved extended absence.

Donald Fowler
NVAC 11th District Representative
Chief Negotiator, Labor

Donald L Fowler

Date: 6/8/18

Philip D. Fedderly
Employee & Labor Relations Specialist
Chief Negotiator, Management

Philip D. Fedderly

Date: 6/8/18

Genea Lewis
President, AFGE Local 498

Genea Lewis

Date: 8 June 2018

Nadeem Zafar
Chief of P&LMS
VAPSHCS

Nadeem Zafar

Date: 06/08/18

Beverly R. Anderson
President, AFGE Local 3197

Beverly R. Anderson

Date: 06/08/2018

Kathleen Aldridge
Laboratory Manager
VAPSHCS

Kathleen Aldridge

Date: 6/8/18

PERFORMANCE PLAN FOR FY 2018
GS 5 Medical Technician- P&LMS

* Indicates CRITICAL ELEMENT(s)

* Program Goals and Customer Service - Strategic Goal #1 to provide veterans with personalized, proactive, patient-driven health care. In accordance with Strategic Goal #3 program goals and resources are aligned to deliver sustained value and support to the veterans through service line support of medical staff and service delivery. These are followed by the employee for both external (veterans) customers and internal (coworkers and facility staff).

- **Performance Element:** Responds to customer needs. Assesses the customer's concern properly and performs the tasks required to resolve the problem within the scope of the position.
- **Performance Element:** Customer concerns are addressed in a timely manner.
- **Performance Element:** Considers the age of the patient when assessing and providing patient care as it relates to his/her ability to understand directions. Respects confidentiality when discussing patient's records.
- **Performance Element :** Communicates with customers and co-workers and responds to requests for assistance in a professional and respectful manner.
- **Performance Element:** Maintains confidentiality of all sensitive, personal, or protected information.
- **Performance Element:** Demonstrates situational awareness and works as part of a team. Shows coworkers empathy and respect. Treats coworkers with courtesy and sensitivity.
- **Performance Element:** Treats all employees with respect regardless of their position, personality, culture, or background.
- **Performance Element:** Understands the mission, vision, and values of the organization. Provides support to fellow employees in accomplishing mission.
- **Performance Element:** Shows good stewardship of time and effort and makes effective use of tour-of-duty time to accomplish tasks. During gaps in workflow, shows initiative in recognizing and performing duties that need to be accomplished without being assigned.

Achievement Level:

FULLY SUCCESSFUL- Majority of work is accomplished in a manner that keeps within the policy and procedures of the laboratory. No more than 4 valid documented instances of failure to meet the above standards during the rating period have occurred.

EXCEPTIONAL- Fully successful on all measures of the element plus a documented positive impact on the element through participation in a quality improvement project or performance of extra duties (e.g., demonstrating superior interpersonal relationships in the work setting, with no instances of disrespect toward patients, co-workers, or supervisors, contributing ideas for more efficient teamwork, consistently performing collateral duties to build lab image as helpful to outside departments, consistently maintaining calm and respect even when confronting antagonistic people and situations, accurate and timely self-assessment).

* Quality of Work and Technical Competency- Strategic Goal #1 to provide veterans with personalized, proactive, patient-driven health care.

- **Performance Element:** Obtains specimens that are properly identified and labeled following regulatory agency requirements and CLSI standards on patient identification.
- **Performance Element:** Demonstrates proficiency as a qualified collector with the necessary knowledge, skills and proficiency to collect and handle specimens collected for the Federal Workplace Drug Testing Program.
- **Performance Element:** Samples are collected in the appropriate containers with no more than 2 redraws per reporting period due to inappropriate containers.
- **Performance Element:** Blood draws average 7 minutes per outpatient and 10 minutes per inpatient from the time presenting to the phlebotomist.
- **Performance Element:** Specimens are distributed to the appropriate section in a timely manner.
- **Performance Element:** STAT and ASAP specimens are brought to the attention of testing personnel within established time frames.
- **Performance Element:** Obtains acceptable specimens, maintains specimen integrity and is alert to specimen errors.

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- **Performance Element:** Prepares specimens for testing and operates and maintains the modular automated chemistry processor.

Achievement Levels:

FULLY SUCCESSFUL- Majority of work is accomplished in a manner that keeps within the policy and procedures of the laboratory. No more than 4 valid documented instances of failure to meet the above standards during the rating period have occurred.

EXCEPTIONAL- Fully successful on all measures of the element plus a documented positive impact on the element through participation in a quality improvement project or performance of extra duties (e.g., consistently covering workload when co-workers are absent, no more than one verifiable event per year where any of the above elements were violated.)

*Safety– Strategic Goal #2 to achieve improvements in health care outcomes by following guidelines for infection control and the prevention of disease.

- **Performance Element:** Follows regulatory agency requirements and CLSI standards guidelines for hand hygiene, changes gloves between patients, and decontaminates work area, as required
- **Performance Element:** Promotes a safe, clean and aesthetically pleasing environment for co-workers and staff. Works to reduce the risk of health care-associated infections.
- **Performance Element:** Completes all mandatory training for safety, chemical hygiene, infection control, and other assigned programs.

Achievement levels:

FULLY SUCCESSFUL: Majority of work is accomplished in a manner that keeps within the policy and procedures of the laboratory. There are documented instances of accomplishing the elements. No more than 2 valid and documented instances of failure to meet the above standards during the rating period have occurred.

EXCEPTIONAL: Fully successful on all measures of the element without any need for a performance improvement plan, plus a documented positive impact on the element through participation in a safety project or performance of extra duties (e.g., independently assessing workplace safety, contributing ideas and discussion about safe work practices, extra work toward inspection readiness, accurate and timely self-assessment).

Supply and Inventory Control

- **Performance Element:** Replenishes stock items and maintains adequate supplies.
- **Performance Element:** Supplies are replenished in timely manner.

Achievement Level:

FULLY SUCCESSFUL: Drawing room is clean and has adequate supplies with no more than 2 events where supplies were not properly requested/ordered. Supplies are replaced and/or requested with minimal guidance. Drawing room logistics are properly maintained when assigned.

EXCEPTIONAL: Fully successful in all measures of the element and no events where supplies were not properly requested/ordered.

Referral Testing

- **Performance element:** Monitors and maintains refrigerators and freezers as directed by supervisor
- **Performance element:** Processes send out specimens as directed by supervisor

Achievement Level:

FULLY SUCCESSFUL: Temperature is monitored and documented and refrigerators/freezers are kept clean with no more than 4 events per performance period where temperature was undocumented or refrigerators/freezers were not cleaned.

EXCEPTIONAL: Fully successful in all elements and no events where temperature was undocumented or

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refrigerators/freezers were not cleaned.

Training and Supervisory Support- New employees and initial operator training are approached in a proactive and diligent manner. During mentored training, the employee is receptive to the trainer, peer reviewer, designee, or supervisor.

- **Performance Element:** Participates in the training of new employees, students, house staff, or research personnel.
- **Performance Element:** Completes assigned projects in a timely manner fulfilling requirements as defined by supervisor.
- **Performance Element:** Keeps current with policy changes implemented via lab meetings, electronic mail, station memos, etc.

Achievement Levels:

FULLY SUCCESSFUL: Majority of work is accomplished in a manner that keeps within the policy and procedures of the laboratory. There are documented instances of accomplishing the elements. Documentation is based on electronic evidence, ancillary review, participation in QIP or other group processes, survey results, and /or direct observation from the supervisor. No more than 4 valid, significant, and documented instances of failure to meet the above standards during the rating period have occurred.

EXCEPTIONAL: Fully successful on all measures of the element without any need for a performance improvement plan, plus a documented positive impact on the element through participation in a quality improvement project or performance of extra duties (e.g., takes initiative and volunteers for orphan tasks, suggests ideas or initiates projects for better organization of section tasks, extra work toward customer service or inspection readiness, accurate and timely self-assessment).

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Position Description

Medical Technician

GS-0645-05

PD# 41199-A

INTRODUCTION

The position is located in the Pathology & Laboratory Medicine Service (PLMS) at the VA Puget Sound Health Care System (VAPSHCS). The employee performs a variety of functions, including: accession specimens into computer system; collects, evaluates and processes patient specimens; answers questions relative to specimens; instructs and assists patients; and sends out specimens for testing. Follows policies and procedures established by service, medical center, VA and regulatory agencies.

MAJOR DUTIES

Collection: 30%

The employee is responsible for the collection and handling of specimens in accordance with the Federal Workplace Drug Testing Program as administered and regulated by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) for drug testing of new employees. The employee is totally knowledgeable of the DHHS Specimen Collection Procedures Guideline. The employee is trained and certified, or eligible for training and certification, in the collection process which includes, but is not limited to all steps necessary to complete a collection correctly including the proper completion and transmission of the Chain of Custody Form, identification of "Problem" collections including attempted adulteration, etc., understanding of fatal flaws, correctable flaws, and how to correct these errors when they occur. The employee is responsible for maintaining the integrity of the collection process, ensuring the privacy of the donor, ensuring the security of the specimen, and avoiding conduct or statements that could be viewed as inappropriate or offensive.

The employee must also demonstrate initial proficiency to the VAPSHCS Certified Collector. Once trained and certified the employee must successfully perform five consecutive error-free mock collections in the following scenarios: 1. Two uneventful; 2. One insufficient specimen quantity; 3. One temperature out of range; 4. One where the donor refuses to sign the Chain of Custody Form and initial the specimen bottle tamper-evident seals. The Certified Collector must monitor and evaluate the employee's performance, in person or by a means that provides real-time observation and interaction between the instructor and trainee, and attest in writing that the mock collections are "error-free." This person is a qualified collector who has demonstrated the necessary knowledge, skills and proficiency by regularly conducting DHHS drug tests collections for a period of at least a year; conducting collector training in accordance with the DHHS guidelines for a year; or successfully completing a "train the trainer" course.

Employee interacts directly with liver/kidney/bone marrow transplant recipients or prospective recipients. Although the test names for transplant patients are identical, the protocols to follow are not the same, and are not specified in the VistA test order. The collector must make judgement, after reviewing the patient record, of which protocol to follow.

Employee often encounters patients presenting for blood draw, who don't have orders for tests. The collector must interview the patient to determine which specialty clinic or primary care provider failed to order the tests. This requires judgement to correlate patient interview information with the patient's record. Additionally, the collector must then contact the correct provider and advise the provider to order the test. During this time the collector must provide re-assurance to the Veteran that they are not the cause of the mishap, and that a resolution will occur allowing for the blood draw; ensuring the Veteran does not have to return another day.

Collects and processes specimens obtained for analyses throughout P&LMS and associated reference laboratories, ensuring safety and non-traumatic processes are used with critical concern for the patients and the quality of the specimen.

Performs venipuncture specimen collections from inpatient, outpatients, and ambulatory inpatients, with a minimal number of failures, patient bruising, or required re-sticks, ensuring that samples are submitted to the clinical laboratory with the least possible delay. The employee must make judgements regarding sufficiency of sample, panel selection, and selection of testing medium. The employee must make independent judgement and decision as to how many of each type of tube to use with each test ordered. With 5000-plus tests available to order, and each test having unique tube type and quantity requirements, the collector must decide the appropriate protocol to follow.

The employee accessions Laboratory tests via the use of Vista and has the ability to build, add/remove tests, edit, print and build collection lists in Vista. He/she will navigate through the procedure of checking patients into the phlebotomy area taking care to follow protocol including checking 2 forms of ID before obtaining specimens, logging patients in, and accessioning into the computer for the proper labels. The employee checks for orders by looking into the computer 30 days before and after the date of arrival and ensures that only authorized medical personnel have requested tests. The employee generates labels to match the test requisition slips, the electronic request, and the patient's identification. All specimens must be properly labeled.

The employee is especially careful and attentive to blood bank specimens. All blood bank orders require proper identification when collection is performed, particularly outpatient collections.

The employee must receive information for the blood bank tube from the patient, i.e., full name and full social security number. The information on the tube must match the information on the Bloodworks Northwest Request for Blood and Blood Components form exactly. Information must be handwritten on the blood tube and the phlebotomist must date/time and sign the label on the tube. The phlebotomist then signs the request form verifying that proper procedure was followed and the reviews the form with a second person and has them sign. There is zero tolerance for errors.

During collection procedures, the employee makes gross visual observations and identifies subtle changes regarding the patient's condition, notifying appropriate emergency personnel as needed. The employee uses standard aseptic procedures and safeguards. Specimens will be obtained

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from individuals utilizing age specific criteria for the population. The use of a syringe or butterfly may be required in obtaining difficult specimens. The pre-analytical phase (i.e. proper skin cleansing, asking if a patient is fasting, choosing the proper needle to avoid lysing cells, choosing the proper tube for particular tests) is extremely important and is observed to provide accuracy of final reported values being used in the diagnostic area of medicine.

Responsible for the collection and processing of specimens used for Drugs of Abuse screening for Veteran Outpatients. The employee exhibits the knowledge and skills required to verify the identity of the patient using a minimum of two patient identifiers and adheres to all regulations to ensure a valid specimen collection.

Processing: 30%

Performs work related to tests and examinations using the techniques of medical laboratory practice in one or more specialized areas. Prepares specimens for testing, such as labeling, centrifugation, decanting, aliquotting, etc., prepares reagents, performs the test procedure, verifies the accuracy of the results and reports results in the VISTA computer system. The technician must be familiar with tests performed throughout the Laboratory, i.e. cytology, microbiology, chemistry, and hematology. Duties require that the employee be knowledgeable with the Laboratory Vista menu and be able to easily locate electronic requisitions.

Operates centrifuges, reporting any malfunction to supervisor. Evaluates temperature requirements of refrigerators on the wards as needed. Ensures work area remains clean. Processes timely request for supplies to ensure adequate materials are always maintained.

Operates and maintains the modular automated chemistry (MPA) processor which utilizes 8 independent modules to prepare specimens for testing: VAPSHCS processes over 2,800,000 annually. It is imperative that the automated chemistry processor is available for use 23 hours per day. 1 hour per day is for routine planned maintenance. When malfunctions occur the employee must independently determine decision points and immediately carry out the corrective action with each malfunction. Without taking immediate corrective action, or waiting for a supervisor to provide guidance, tests results are delayed, which could cause harm to patients, especially for STAT tests. The employee often must develop work arounds to by-pass modules that are malfunctioning, in order to keep the process flowing.

Required to complete two weeks hands on training course in order to be certified to operate the automated chemistry processing instrument. In addition, the employee must show ability to trouble shoot issues on the automated instrument and able to work independently to be assigned to operate the automated instrument. The employee determines what specimen tubes needs to be manually centrifuged or processed through the chemistry processing instrument and assign tubes to specific tube rack (i.e. unspun, pre-spun, multi-tube, etc.) and loads racks to the automated instrument accordingly (STAT or routine port). The employee as needed reconfigures the computer software in the automated instrument to direct or redirect chemistry specimen samples to the designated chemistry analyzers. The employee accesses the sample monitor to locate sample location from the archived rack for add-on tests. The employee also accesses the

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sample monitor to determine what proper action to take in order to correct instrument problem. In addition, the employee reconfigures setting for specimen tube racks and saves current system configuration to back-up disc.

Conducts training for new laboratory health technicians (HT), new medical laboratory technologists (MT) staff and medical technologist/medical laboratory technician students how to operate and trouble-shoot the automated processing instrument. Employee also teaches new laboratory technicians, technologists, and the complexities of working in the receiving, accessioning, and processing area of the laboratory. The employee operates the automated computer hardware, clears specimen racks from the computer hardware, safely empties biohazard waste bin, unloads patient samples from the flexible sample sorter (FSS), handles samples that are rejected by the automated processing instrument, archives samples, place archived specimens in the walk-in refrigerator, documents problems and field service calls to the company's technical support/service as needed. The employee diligently performs and documents daily, weekly and monthly maintenance, reloads consumables on the automated processing instrument, and order monthly consumables as needed.

Aliquots blood, urine, and body fluids on shared specimens for other testing areas of the laboratory, measures and documents total volume of a 24 hour urine specimen, accessions pours aliquot, and adjust pH of the urine as needed as needed.

Must be highly experienced in operating the automated chemistry processing instrument and knowledgeable at the tube station to work independently on off-shifts, weekends and holidays. Receives and sorts specimens collected from inpatients, outpatients, and all CBOC's, checks request slips for proper information, logs in specimen, and delivers specimens to various laboratory sections.

Utilizes a variety of reference materials to determine specimen and storage requirements, quantity, patient preparation, etc. of any requested Laboratory test, including reference lab tests. Responsible for receiving accessioning and processing of laboratory specimens from the main draw room, emergency department (ED), Primary Care Clinic draw room, ward collect specimens, Community Based Outpatient Clinics (CBOC), and Home Base Health Care (HBHC) patient draws.

When receiving the specimens, the employee verifies the accuracy of information on each specimen, accessions (receives) each specimen into the VISTA computer system, prints and accurately labels each specimen. The employee also manually accessions (multi-purpose accessioning) any specimen(s) received with a written laboratory requisition (i.e. computer down time form, miscellaneous orders, etc.) or electronic work order from surgery units and non-VA hospitals. The employee communicates with physicians, patient support team (ward collect), nurses, clinic facilitators, and CBOC personnel, to resolve specimen order errors or integrity issues. The employee sorts all specimens by laboratory department and distributes specimens to corresponding testing area (i.e. Hematology, Coagulation, Urinalysis, Blood Bank, Microbiology, Send Out (Reference Laboratory)). The employee generates (document) PIR or ePER occurrence

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reports for any specimen(s) rejected for analysis (i.e. unlabeled, mislabeled, clotted, QNS, or other reasons for rejections).

Efficiently and accurately performs computer downtime operations when VISTA and/or CPRS are not operational; manually enters all patient information found in the computer down time form, test orders, and generates labels; labels, sorts, and delivers all specimens to designated testing areas of the lab; and diligently reorders laboratory tests in the VISTA system for all patients once the VISTA system becomes operational.

Patient Care: 20%

The employee is the first point of contact for all patients in the service. He/she secures the confidence and cooperation of patient during phlebotomy. Explains procedure and positions patients for desired results. Varies positioning to adjust for patients' medical condition(s). Special attention should be given to explaining any post phlebotomy procedure that may be needed, such as applying extra pressure and leaving bandage in place for extended period of time to patients on blood thinners, and any concerns that may arise from the patient. Takes emergency care procedures in the event a patient has a reaction to blood collection procedures, e.g., fainting, hematoma, anxiety, etc.

Referral Testing: 20%

The employee is responsible for the monitoring and maintenance of all refrigerators and freezers in the service, including monitoring room temperature. Daily, or as directed by the supervisor, the employee is responsible to document the temperature of each device on a temperature log and report any deviation from the acceptable temperature range to the supervisor. Monthly, or as directed by the supervisor, the employee is responsible for the cleaning of all refrigerators and freezers in the service, and defrosting of all freezers, as directed by the supervisor, in accordance with all infection control guidelines.

Employee is responsible for the monitoring and maintenance of all centrifuges and the section. This includes, but is not limited to, cleaning the interior and exterior of each device in accordance with standard infection control policies and documenting the completion of the task on the log sheet. The employee is responsible for reporting all observation of excessive soil or disrepair to the supervisor.

The position is responsible for receiving and storage of Laboratory reagents and supplies. This includes, but is not limited to, documenting the receipt date on each item, verifying the storage requirement of each item by temperature requirement (room temperature, refrigerator or freezer), and rotating the stock to ensure the newest supply is in the back. In addition, the employee is required to check the expiration date of all reagents and supplies in the room temperature storage room for expiration, sequestering the item, documenting the findings on the log, and notifying the supervisor of the findings.

The employee must independently identify hazardous materials and decide which shipping protocol to use for varying hazardous specimens. Variance from these strict protocols could likely

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result in injury/harm to co-worker, medical center staff, shipping/carrier personnel, and receiving reference lab staff. The employee must successfully complete the on-line training and certification for Federal and State regulatory for packaging & shipping category A and B, and exempt laboratory specimens in order to work in the send out area. The employee must be also knowledgeable in packaging specimens according to state and federal DOT and IATA regulations and specimen temperature shipping requirements (i.e. frozen, refrigerated, ambient). The employee accesses UPS Campus ship website to create appropriate shipments for each package (i.e. next day, early am-next day, Saturday delivery and with or without dry ice). The employee notifies send out supervisor on any unusual or expensive test requests for review and approval.

The employee processes send out specimens and stores specimens according to specimen storage requirements (i.e. ambient, frozen or refrigerated). The employee creates manifest of electronically interfaced tests for Laboratory Corporation, retrieves aliquot specimens from appropriate storage areas, process and packages specimens according the shipping temperature requirements. The employee enters electronic work order by accessing BEACON (LabCorp) Website. The employee enters all patient and test information manually, including storage temperature and any necessary information pertinent to the particular test (i.e. viral load, specimen source, etc.), submits the test requests and prints test requisitions. The employee packages specimens with corresponding requisitions in appropriately labeled biohazard bags and stores in correct storage temperature are for reference courier pickup reference courier pickup. The employee also delivers packages to mailroom for UPS pickup. The employee manually completes send out test requisitions form for University of Washington laboratories, process specimens, and packages specimens for UW courier or calls for a taxi if the specimen is STAT.

Maintains clean workspace and continuously monitors area for contamination. Procedures for properly decontaminating spills and the safe disposal of all contaminated materials must be understood and followed at all times.

Factor 1 - Knowledge Required by the Position:

Completion of an accredited phlebotomy training program.

Knowledge of biology, human anatomy, patient relations and general medical laboratory functions. Ability to organize materials and procedures associated with the pre-analytic accessioning/processing of a wide spectrum of clinical specimens for multiple laboratory assays and insure the accurate and timely handling of specimens.

Knowledge of phlebotomy procedures to include the Vacutainer collection system, safety needles and butterfly needle devices, syringes and capillary puncture techniques, and collection using microtainers.

Knowledge of proper patient identifiers required to ensure proper identification. Skill in oral communication to thoroughly explain testing procedures to patients and put them at ease, and to secure patient cooperation and confidence. Ability to accurately verify patient name and social

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security number on all specimens received. Knowledge of the proper tubes to be collected and correct sequence for obtaining the specimens.

Ability to perform phlebotomy based on knowledge of standardized approved procedures and techniques on patients ranging in age from young adult to elderly with ability to use approved deviations from standard techniques to draw difficult patients.

Knowledge and understanding of all safety, disaster, exposure control, chemical and hand hygiene, and infection control plans. Thorough knowledge of Standard Precautions. Knowledge of the proper use of personal protective equipment during specimen collection and processing.

Knowledge and ability to access and utilize Vista and CPRS to accurately read and interpret electronic lab requisitions, and to utilize the electronic systems to accession, add and delete tests as needed. After lab tests have been accessioned, specimens are properly labeled. Knowledge of proper use and disposal of all phlebotomy blood drawing systems.

Knowledge of ordering and procurement procedures to ensure an accurate inventory of supplies is received, maintained and stocked correctly.

Skill in oral communication methods and techniques; as well as skill in establishing and maintaining effective and cooperative work relationships.

Factor 2 Supervisory Controls:

The supervisor or designee provide initial guidance on the work to be performed and instructs the employee on any changes in procedures. The employee initiates and carries out assignments independently according to established laboratory protocols and procedures. Employee handles deviations that arise in accordance with established procedures.

Independent judgement and decision are required when dealing with organ transplant recipients, identifying reference laboratories for esoteric tests, shipping hazardous specimens, equipment malfunction resolution, sample adequacy, test tube medium and protocol, as well as patients without test orders. Completed work is reviewed for accuracy and technical soundness and is periodically checked for compliance with established requirements.

Factor 3 Guidelines

Guidelines include SOPs, manuals and directives that describe the procedures to be followed. Guidelines are supplemented by oral directive when necessary. Guidelines cover routine situations. The employee uses initiative and good judgment in selecting guidelines for application to individual situations and to determine which situations require supervisory or staff involvement. Situations to which the existing guidelines cannot be applied or significant potential deviations from the guidelines are referred to the supervisor.

Utilizes a variety of reference materials to determine specimen and storage requirements, quantity, patient preparation, etc. of any requested Laboratory test, including reference lab tests.

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Factor 4: Complexity

Employee performs related steps and processes to ensure satisfactory specimens are obtained for laboratory testing and that all data regarding the specimens is accurate and available for testing. Duties require screening and instructing patients on numerous procedures to obtain accurate test results, taking into consideration many variables, which affect the specific case. Exercises skill in drawing or collecting required specimens with responsibility for ensuring quality and quantity are sufficient. Recognizes and accommodates situations requiring use of special techniques to obtain a quality sample which will render an accurate result. Preparation and packing of outsources referral specimens must be accomplished in accordance with specific protocols, which require great care and knowledge of regulatory requirements.

Employee independently decides what needs to be done by choosing from various options that require recognition of and the differences among a few recognizable alternatives. Employee responds to changing priorities that frequently depend on the urgency of the situation and the differences in each patient. Patient care tasks require recognizing differences and adjusting their care accordingly.

Factor 5: Scope and Effect

Technical competence and attention to detail provided by the employee insures that the results of laboratory testing performed are reliable for patient care applications by maintaining both the integrity of the specimen and positive patient identification and that collection and pre-analytic processing procedures are appropriate for the test requested. Performance of duties affects the efficiency and reliability with which the laboratory provides services, and thus affects the quality of patient care.

Performs work related to tests and examinations using the techniques of medical laboratory practice in one or more specialized areas. Prepares specimens for testing, such as labeling, centrifugation, decanting, aliquotting, etc., prepares reagents, performs the test procedure, verifies the accuracy of the results and reports results in the VISTA computer system. The technician must be familiar with tests performed throughout the Laboratory, i.e. cytology, microbiology, chemistry, and hematology. Duties require that the employee be knowledgeable with the Laboratory Vista menu and be able to easily locate electronic requisitions.

The employee operates centrifuges, reporting any malfunction to supervisor, as needed, and evaluates temperature requirements of refrigerators on the wards as needed. Ensures work area remains clean. Processes timely request for supplies to ensure adequate materials are always maintained.

Factor 6: Personal Contacts

Personal contacts are with patients, their family members, staff pathologist, laboratory staff, physicians, nurses, other hospital staff, reference laboratory personnel and Bloodworks Northwest personnel.

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Factor 7: Purpose of Contacts

Purpose of Contacts with patient is to provide information about the collection procedure to minimize any patient apprehension or fear. Other contacts are for the purpose of exchanging technical information, clarifying lab orders, receiving instructions, requesting referral laboratory test support or retrieving test results.

Factor 8: Physical Demands

The work requires extensive periods of standing and walking, regular and recurring bending, moderate lifting, stooping and stretching.

Factor 9: Work Environment

The work area is well lit, heated and ventilated. The work involves regular and recurring moderate risks of exposure to infectious materials which require special safety precautions. There is contact with potentially biologically hazardous specimens (some of which may contain hepatitis or HIV virus). There is frequent contact with patients with undiagnosed illnesses and the employee has the potential to be exposed to communicable disease. Employees are mandated to use appropriate personal protective equipment.

Standard Precautions must be taken to protect self and others from contamination. Employee is required to wear/use personal protective equipment or gear such as gloves, coats, and masks according to regulatory agencies.

OTHER SIGNIFICANT FACTS

SAFETY: The employee must be familiar with the Facility Safety Plan, Laboratory specific safety/chemical/hygiene and Infection Control Plans, utilization of material safety data sheets (MSDSS), injury treatment and reporting requirements. The Technician must be familiar with the use of protective equipment, engineering controls, and safe work practices. Situations which require significant deviation are referred to the Supervisor.

Employee promotes the safety, occupational health and fire protection program of the station, complies with prescribed or well-known safety work practices and procedures; reports hazardous conditions to supervisor. Reports unsafe work habits and unsafe practices and procedures. Wears appropriate personal protective equipment as may be prescribed for the job being performed; uses good judgment in recognizing hazardous conditions and situations so that the potential for physical injuries and/or occupational illness are controlled. The employee is responsible for following universal Precautions and all Infection Control Regulations as applicable.

CUSTOMER SERVICE: Meets the needs of customers while supporting the Medical Center and Service missions. Consistently communicates and treats customers (patients, visitors, volunteers, and all Medical Center staff) in a courteous, tactful, and respectful manner. Provides the customer with consistent information according to established policies and procedures. Handles conflict and problems in dealing with the customer constructively and appropriately.

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ADP SECURITY: Protects printed and electronic files containing sensitive data in accordance with the provisions of the Privacy Act of 1974 and other applicable laws, federal regulations, VA statutes and policy, and VHS&RA policy. Protects the data from unauthorized release or from loss, alteration, or unauthorized deletion. Follows applicable regulations and instructions regarding access to computerized files, release of access codes, etc., as set out in the computer access agreement that the employee signs.

AGE-RELATED COMPETENCY (AGE CATEGORIES): Takes into consideration age-related differences of the various veteran populations with this institution which include: a) Young adulthood (20-40). Persons in general have normal physical functions and lifestyles. Person establishes relationships with significant others and is competent to relate to others. b) Middle age (40-65). Persons may have physical problems and may have changes in lifestyles because children have left home or change in occupation goals. c) Older adulthood (65-75). Persons may be adapting to retirement and changing physical abilities. Chronic illness may also develop. d) Middle old (74-84). Persons may be adapting to declines in speed of movement, reaction time, and sensory abilities. Also, persons may have increasing dependence on others. e) Old 85 and over). Increasing physical problems may develop.

COMPUTER KNOWLEDGE - WORD PROCESSING (MS-WORD): Uses MS Word or comparable word processing software to execute several office automation functions such as storing and retrieving electronic documents and files; activating printers; in serving and deleting text; formatting letters, reports and memoranda; and transmitting and receiving e-mail. VISTA: Uses the Veterans health Information & Technology Architecture (VISTA) to access information in the Medical Center computer system. Is knowledgeable and uses the Laboratory computer package as appropriate.

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Ground Rules for bargaining appropriate arrangements and procedures, revised GS-0645-05 Medical Technician Performance Standards which pertain to VA Puget Sound Health Care System (VAPSHCS) Pathology and Laboratory Medicine Service (P&LMS) Medical Technician employees located at American Lake and Seattle Divisions with the American Federation of Government Employees (AFGE), AFL-CIO, National VA Council #53 (NVAC), AFGE Local 498 and AFGE Local 3197.

GROUND RULES

The following constitutes an agreement of ground rules between the parties of the VA Puget Sound Health Care System (VAPSHCS) at all locations, and the American Federation of Government Employees (AFGE), AFL-CIO National VA Council #53 (NVAC), AFGE Local 498, and AFGE Local 3197, concerning bargaining appropriate arrangements and procedures of the GS-0645-05 Medical Technician Performance Standards utilized in P&LMS for the Seattle and American Lake campuses at VA Puget Sound Health Care System. Hereinafter the parties are referred to as "Management" and the "Union."

1. This agreement is made to the extent of statute and in accordance with the 2011 Master Agreement between the Department of Veterans Affairs (DVA) and AFGE. These ground rules will govern the appropriate arrangements and procedures for negotiating a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the parties for bargaining the impact and implementation of the revised GS-0645-05 Medical Technician Performance Standards. The parties may amend, only in writing, any provisions of these ground rules or any agreed upon language by mutual consent.
2. Any current, Local Supplemental Agreement or MOU will remain in force unless there are specific provisions that are in conflict with the provisions of the current Master Agreement or by mutual agreement of both parties.
3. The Chief Negotiator for either party has the authority to sign any agreement reached by the parties herein. The final agreement upon the terms and wording of the MOU concerning bargaining appropriate arrangements and procedures of the aforementioned revised GS-0645-05 Medical Technician Performance Standards will be binding upon the parties unless and until either party gives notice to the other of its desire to amend or modify said MOU. Proposed changes to the final agreement (MOU) may be initiated by either of the parties at any time, with no less than a thirty (30) calendar day written notice.
4. If the parties are unable to reach agreement after the fourth (4th) bargaining session, a joint request for the service of a mediator from the Mediation and Conciliations Service will be made. The two Chief negotiators can, by mutual agreement, extend the sessions and/or number of sessions. Other options under Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) can be utilized upon mutual agreement. If impasse is reached, either party may file with the Federal Services Impasse Panel (FSIP) after giving notice to the other party. If mediation does not resolve the impasse, the parties agree to proceed to binding arbitration using FSIP.
5. VAPSHCS Management will provide secure, mutually accessible, adequate space for negotiations and caucus rooms, which are adequately lighted, heated/air conditioned and

spacious with telephone access, electrical outlets for computers, and readily available restroom facilities. Management will also provide adequate administrative support, for both teams, and reference materials that are routinely available at the VAPSHCS.

6. The Union and Management shall be entitled to an equal number of bargaining members. Each party may have up to three (3) negotiators, which by mutual agreement may be increased based upon the complexity and/or numbers of issues to be negotiated, which include third party procedures. Each party will identify their Chief Negotiator, who will be empowered with requisite authority to negotiate on behalf of their respective party, approve decisions and be responsible for the leadership of their respective party.

7. For clarification of issues, the parties agree that the participation of any Subject Matter Expert (SME) shall be for the purpose of providing resource information mutually beneficial to the parties and would be the responsibility of the requesting party. Nothing precludes either party from requesting a recorder on 100% official time.

8. The parties will use a combination of bargaining techniques. As each proposal is taken up, the parties offering a proposal will explain it, and will at a minimum provide the meaning and objectives of the proposed training, etc. There will be ample opportunity for questions and answers, additional information, and other discussion. Both parties will be allowed full opportunity to present necessary and relevant information to support their positions. The parties will follow this procedure in a good faith effort to reach agreement.

9. The first bargaining session will be conducted at a time and date mutually agreed to by the parties, but no later than thirty (30) calendar days after the effective date of the Ground Rules. Negotiations will not be tape recorded (either audio or video). Notes are the responsibility of each party. No official minutes will be taken. If exceptions are discussed and documented outside these ground rules or resulting MOU, the Chief Negotiators' signatures must be included for them to be considered valid. Each negotiating workday will have mutually agreed upon time for meals with appropriate breaks. Through mutual agreement, the Chief Negotiators may make changes to the session schedule.

10. All proposals/counter proposals will be hardcopy and addressed to the Chief Negotiators, who will initial each proposal on each agreement reached to signify that negotiation concerning that issue is completed. Both parties will be allowed full opportunity to present necessary and relevant information to support their positions.

11. The Chief Negotiators will be responsible for, and by mutual agreement, permit observers to attend local bargaining. These observers will not participate in discussions and will otherwise abide by all the ground rules agreed upon by the parties. Each Chief Negotiator may approve attendance of alternates at the negotiation sessions for their respective team. The alternate will have the full rights, responsibilities and authority of the team member for whom they are substituting.

12. In accordance with 5 USC § 7131 (a), statutory official time will be authorized for the parties during travel, ground rules and actual negotiations. No party may delay negotiations without mutual consent. Changes to the agreed upon times/days will be by mutual consent of the Chief Negotiators and only for specific reasons.

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Chief Negotiator, Labor

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