



GP FACT SHEET

Point of Care Testing (PoCT) in NSW Ambulance

Emergency departments (EDs) face many challenges and are simultaneously confronted with a mismatch of hospital resources against a growing public demand. As a result patients presenting to an ED can frequently experience prolonged waiting times. NSW Ambulance has introduced several Models of Care designed to provide the right care at the right time in the right place which ultimately have a positive impact for patients and on ED demand within NSW. Extended Care Paramedics (ECPs) and PoCT are just two of those Models of Care.

ECPs and PoCT

ECPs have received advanced training to enable identification of the clinical needs and risks of patients and determine the most appropriate disposition for them. As a result ECPs may be able to offer alternate destinations other than an ED. With the addition of PoCT, ECPs can now make more informed clinical decisions about their patients and can use these results to refer where appropriate to General Practitioners (GPs). PoCT can provide NSW Ambulance ECPs and GPs with immediate results for many commonly ordered tests that would otherwise require referral to a pathology lab.

What are the aims of PoCT in NSW Ambulance?

- To reduce unnecessary patient presentations to hospital EDs offering safe and effective healthcare alternatives to patients.
- To improve clinical outcomes for patients.
- To reduce the number of contacts patients require in order to access appropriate care.

- To improve ambulance operational performance
- To provide a financially efficient service delivery model that delivers wider health system savings
- To add value to ambulance encounters, linking Triple Zero (000) callers with appropriate services.

Essential partnerships

NSW Ambulance has partnered with NSW Health Pathology and NSW Treasury to trial PoCT within the ECP clinical role. We are now in Phase 2 of a Proof of Concept trial using PoCT devices. ECPs are using PoCT within their enhanced clinical role in medical/clinical examination, recognition and management of minor illness & injury presentations.

GPs are acknowledged as a vital partner in this Proof of Concept. PoCT is a tool to support and enhance assessment of patients presenting to ECPs via triple zero (000). Through a partnership with the patient's GP, PoCT can enable enhanced provision of definitive care and appropriate referral for a range of presentations including chronic and complex care.

What results can GPs expect to receive from ECPs?

CoaguChek XS Pro®

- INR

epoc®

- Venous blood gas values:
 - pH, pCO₂, pO₂, lactate, base excess, bicarbonate
- Electrolytes:
 - Sodium, Potassium, Calcium
- Creatinine
- Chloride
- Glucose
- Haemoglobin
- Haematocrit



About the current PoCT devices in use by NSW Ambulance ECPs



NSW Health Pathology’s Quality Framework for ensuring PoCT result accuracy and reliability

NSW Health Pathology has established one of the largest managed PoCT services in the world that is accredited against ISO 15189 Medical laboratories — Particular requirements for quality and competence specify the quality management system requirements particular to medical laboratories.

This is the same international standard that laboratories around the world are accredited against and is part of the quality framework that NSW Health Pathology has implemented to ensure PoCT results are as accurate and reliable as laboratory results.

There are some caveats to this where the latest PoCT technology is not as advanced as the laboratory (i.e. troponin testing) but is still fit for purpose as long as the people using the instruments have been made aware of the differences between the technology.

To ensure result accuracy and reliability, each of the devices is checked to see if it is;

1. Approved for use in Australia by the Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA)
2. Meets the analytical requirements for its intended use
3. Easy to use
4. Results can be sent electronically to patient’s electronic medical records.

NSW Health Pathology only approves devices that meet all of these criteria and uses international recognised criteria to measure precision, bias and laboratory result correlation when performing the evaluation.

Ongoing monitoring and support

Once a device is placed into the PoCT setting, NSW Health Pathology continues to ensure reliability and accuracy of the result by doing the following;

- Making sure all people performing the testing (operators) are trained and competent to use the device(s)
- Regularly monitoring how operators are performing
- Reassessing competency either on a scheduled timeframe or when a problem is identified
- Making sure the material used for testing hasn’t reached an expiry date and is transported and kept at the required temperature
- Checking that quality controls are performed according to a schedule
- Checking that the device is maintained according to a preventive maintenance plan
- Having the National Association for Testing Authorities (NATA) accredit the testing service

Contact details & further information

Dedicated NSW Health Pathology PoCT staff are available to help people using the device should the device be faulty & replace devices so there is minimal disruption to testing.

For further information please go to <http://www.pathology.health.nsw.gov.au/key-projects/point-of-care-testing> or contact Andrew Sargeant, Director – PoCT Service, NSW Health Pathology on 0434 072 698 or Andrew.sargeant@health.nsw.gov.au

NSW Ambulance contact details please email; AMBULANCE-ClinicalIntegratedCare@health.nsw.gov.au