

# POLESTAR COMPASS

a newsletter for physician office labs from  POLESTAR



Mike's Corner

## A Letter from the CEO

As we enter the holiday season, I want to wish each and every one of you the happiest of holidays. This is a time of year to celebrate with family, friends and colleagues. The turning of another year always gives us the opportunity to start new again. As we enter 2008, POLESTAR sees terrific opportunities for physician office laboratories. As economic pressures grow for physician practices, we believe office-based labs can help offset some of the losses with positive cash flow. Additionally, the greater control over testing available when lab services are brought into the office can deliver more independence for the physician, a potentially higher quality of care and a value-add for patients. Our mission for 2008 will remain steadfast: to deliver

all the services required to run a physician office laboratory. No matter how large or small your needs are, think of POLESTAR as your best resource for starting a laboratory or staffing your existing service. This newsletter has valuable tips about upcoming changes from CMS for filing of lab claims. Don't miss this important article on the back page. I welcome your feedback for suggested topics or comments on the articles we include. Write to me at [mdunaway@polestarlabs.com](mailto:mdunaway@polestarlabs.com).

Michael Dunaway - Chief Executive Officer and Owner

## PHYSICIAN OFFICE LABORATORY STAFFING: A SOLUTION FOR YOUR HEADACHES

### Staffing services now available from POLESTAR

Staffing has always been the Achilles' heel of physician office laboratories. Until now. POLESTAR has just launched a new full-service staffing agency to help labs across the country find the critical staff they need. With medical technologist shortages reaching all time new highs, finding the right staff member is critical to the success of your lab. POLESTAR is here to help. We have been placing staff in laboratories since 1989 and have set-up more than 300 labs across the country. This rich history gives us a database of candidates as well as the critical infrastructure needed to match the right staff to a laboratory's unique needs.

Our recently launched staffing service can assist you in finding:

- Medical Technologists
- Medical Laboratory Technicians
- Lab Assistants
- Phlebotomists
- Billing And Coding Specialists

For any of your staffing needs, contact Kristin Ramirez  
[kramirez@polestarlabs.com](mailto:kramirez@polestarlabs.com)  
800.836.4848 x114

### New white paper available.

Email us at [whitepaper@polestarlabs.com](mailto:whitepaper@polestarlabs.com) to receive your copy of "The Check-Up Test for Your Lab"



Polestar Profile

## Dawn Dickey - Vice President of Clinical Services

Before joining POLESTAR, Dawn served as a medical technologist at Kimball Medical Center in Lakewood, NJ, and as lead technologist in the forensic toxicology department at Roche Biomedical. Dawn earned a B.S. in Biology with a concentration in laboratory medicine from East Stroudsburg University, and a degree in Medical Technology from the Jersey Shore School of Medical Technology.

**WHAT:** Dawn has been with POLESTAR for more than 14 years where she has served as a SMARTLab Operator, Clinical Operations Manager and Clinical Operations Director. She oversees all of POLESTAR's clinical operations and works closely with each Lab Director and Clinical Operations Manager to ensure that each

SMARTLab runs smoothly and efficiently. She is the company's go to expert on clinical and regulatory issues.

**WHY?** Dawn's expertise in CLIA compliance, inspection preparation, and quality assurance are critical components for ensuring POLESTAR's SMARTLab services are unmatched in the industry.

*"The medical technologist is the essential core of a physician office lab. Educating the right individual is vital in providing physicians with an efficient, reliable laboratory."*

**CONTACT:** [ddickey@polestarlabs.com](mailto:ddickey@polestarlabs.com)

### REIMBURSEMENT DIRECTIONS

*Each issue will feature news on the changing landscape of POL reimbursement.*

#### Important National Provider Identifier (NPI) Dates to Remember:

As of October 29, 2007, all Medicare carriers will be rejecting claims if they are unable to match the combination of the NPI and the PIN against the NPI/PIN combination in the Medicare NPI crosswalk. Also, as of October 29, 2008, CMS will no longer issue informational edits. Informational edits will be replaced by reject reports. These reports should be used to determine why the claim is being rejected. Pay close attention to the reject reports especially if you use a clearing house or billing service. It's always good practice to check up on your clearing house or billing service. You can also contact your contractor to confirm that the correct NPI was received.

As of March 3, 2008, all 837P and CMS-1500 claims must include an NPI in the primary fields. You may continue to submit both the NPI and PIN or submit only the NPI on the claims. You may not

submit claims with only the PIN. Failure to submit an NPI in the primary field will result in the claim being rejected.

As of May 23, 2008, only the NPI will be accepted on 837P and CMS-1500 claims. This also includes the secondary provider fields on the 837P. If a PIN is submitted it will result in the rejection of the claim.

If you haven't already, you should start sending in a small number of claims using only the NPI. This is a great way to check for rejections and test the system. If no claims are rejected, then increase the volume of submissions and test the system again.

As always, contact your POLESTAR team with your reimbursement questions.

#### What's new in testing?

##### Free Testosterone Testing is Now Available.

Upgrade your testosterone testing to a panel that includes the new validated, patent-pending calculation method for the determination of the free and bioavailable fractions of testosterone for your patients. Testing is appropriate and, in most cases, reimbursable for patients with impotence issues or ovarian dysfunction. National average reimbursement is currently ranging from 70 to 100 dollars per test, depending on geography and insurance. This test can be quickly added to your practice today. Call your POLESTAR contact for more information about the test panel and how it can benefit your patients.