

# Drawbacks of Outsourcing Laboratory Testing

Laboratory testing is an essential part of health care, as it can help diagnose, monitor, and treat various diseases and conditions. Health care providers may have limited capacity, expertise, and equipment to perform even routine diagnostic testing causing delays in diagnosis and treatment. Health care providers may choose to send patient samples to a reference laboratory, that provides clinical pathology services to offset gaps in testing at the point of care. [1](#)

## Outsourcing Routine Laboratory Testing Delays Diagnosis

*Delay and uncertainty:* Outsourcing laboratory testing may result in longer turnaround times and increased uncertainty for the test results, as they depend on the transportation, processing, and reporting of the samples by the reference laboratory. This may affect the timeliness and effectiveness of patient care, especially for urgent or critical cases. [2](#) [3](#)

*Error and variability:* Outsourcing laboratory testing may introduce more sources of error and variability for the test results, as they involve different devices, operators, and environments than the original laboratory. Samples may degrade during transport and errors in processing can occur. These errors and variability may affect the accuracy and reliability of the test results, and may lead to misdiagnosis, inappropriate treatment, or adverse outcomes. [2](#) [3](#) [4](#)

*Cost and reimbursement:* Outsourcing laboratory testing may incur additional costs and complications for the billing and reimbursement of the tests, as they involve different payers, contracts, and regulations than the original laboratory. These costs and complications may affect the financial viability and sustainability of the laboratory and may also impact the affordability and accessibility of the tests for the patients. [2](#) [3](#)

*Communication and coordination:* Outsourcing laboratory testing may require more communication and coordination between the clinic and the reference laboratory, as well as between the laboratory and the clinician, to ensure the quality and continuity of care for the patient. This may require more resources, time, and effort from the laboratory staff, and may also pose some challenges and risks for the data protection and confidentiality of the patient information. [2](#) [3](#)

## Conclusion

Outsourcing laboratory testing is a common and convenient practice that can offer some benefits for the laboratory and the patient, such as access to a wider range of tests. However, outsourcing laboratory testing also has some drawbacks and challenges, such as delay and uncertainty, error and variability, cost and reimbursement, and

communication and coordination. Clinicians should be cautious when deciding between completing tests at the point of care or sending samples to a reference lab.

1. [Recent and Emerging Issues Related to Clinical Laboratory Testing and ...](#)
2. [Referred Laboratory Testing - HHSC](#)
3. [Reducing the occurrence of errors in a laboratory's specimen receiving ...](#)
4. [Limitations of Laboratory Testing | Laboratory Test Guide | Dept. of ...](#)
5. <https://www.bakerdonelson.com/>