Sarah Cannon Molecular Diagnostics: Ad-hoc sample referral guidelines

Unfortunately, for a number of practical and legal reasons, arranging tests which utilise human tissue samples, as opposed to blood for example, can be a bit more complex. If you are an individual patient/patient representative or healthcare professional at an institution that does not currently have a business account with us, the following list is intended to assist you with the procedures involved in getting an appropriate sample to us for analysis. Please go through it yourself and also share a copy with other care team members as necessary. **Please be aware that although we can provide advice, we have no direct means of finding or retrieving any samples that are stored outside of our own institution (HCA Healthcare UK).**

1) Obtain the correct SCMD referral form for the appropriate test (see: https://sarahcannon-md.co.uk/how-do-i-order-a-test/). These are PDF documents that can be filled in electronically, and we strongly recommend doing this if possible, as this avoids any potential legibility issues with forms that have been printed first and then completed by hand.

2) The requesting oncologist (or other appropriate clinical care team members) must complete the first two sections of the referral form (Authorising the request/report destinations). **Please note that we are unable to undertake testing without direct instruction from an appropriate healthcare professional involved in the patient's care.** Similarly, whilst patients may of course receive a copy of their analysis report, the original must be sent to the clinical care team.

3) If you are funding testing yourself, please ensure that your name, phone number and email/postal addresses are specified in the invoicing details section. If you are a member of a private medical insurance scheme, please be aware that many sadly do not cover this type of testing. Even if you are covered, we will still need your name and address along with the insurers details and authorisation code to check this with them. Unfortunately, testing cannot begin until your insurer confirms that cover is in place.

4) Whilst the 'Patient details' section of the referral form may appear obvious, please note that we need at least three patient/sample identifiers to ensure that we have received and are testing the correct specimen.

5) The 'Sample/Pathology' details of the referral form should be filled in your oncologist and/or the pathology department holding your sample(s)*. If these are unclear to the person filling in the form, please ask for a copy of the latest histopathology report to be included with the referral form.

   *If multiple samples are available, and there is no one present locally who is willing or able to determine which may be the most suitable, a selection may be sent to us. However, please ensure that you specify clearly whether we are to select **only the best one or test any/all that are suitable**. This is important, as despite the increased cost, testing multiple samples may be appropriate in certain cases.

6) Please pay particular attention to the specimen return address, especially for patients being treated at a different hospital to that where any surgery or biopsies were undertaken (and hence where samples would normally be stored). **If no location is specified, they will be returned to the reporting address.**

7) With regards to the test that you require, and hence the correct referral to use, this should have already been determined during discussions between the patient and relevant healthcare professional. If choosing our NGS based test MGP-4 however, please be aware that the two components parts, based upon DNA and RNA analysis are performed and priced separately. Choosing both components initially saves time, but also commits you to pay for both regardless of outcome. Choosing our reflex testing option, potentially saves money, as the RNA based component will not be performed if the initial DNA component is deemed to have been suitably informative*. However, if not informative the overall turnaround time to final results (DNA+RNA combined) will be significantly increased.

   *On average, our DNA based NGS panel is informative in around 60-70% of cases, but this varies markedly depending on tumour type. Please contact us for advice if you are struggling to decide whether to choose direct or reflex based testing in a specific case. Please note that such advice may also vary depending upon what previous testing you may have already had, so please have those results to hand when contacting us.

8) Once the test request form has been completed, **it must physically accompany the specimen during transit. NEVER** send a 'naked' specimen without the accompanying paperwork. If it becomes lost for any reason, there will be no way for anyone who may find it to either forward it on to us or repatriate it with its original custodians. This applies irrespective of whatever postal or courier service you may choose to use.

9) There is no need to email us a copy of the completed request form (in fact it may constitute a data protection breach if not sent securely) in addition to that physically accompanying the specimen. If you wish confirmation of sample receipt, please include a note to this effect (most pathology departments will have a specific form for this purpose) with the specimen, or alternatively contact us by phone/email. Please make any such enquires **after** you expect delivery to have occurred or have received apparent confirmation from your chosen couriers*. Please note that we are unable to 'look out' for samples in advance of delivery.

   *We operate in a very densely occupied area of central London, with many businesses sharing the same post code. Unfortunately, whilst inexcusable, couriers have been known to 'abandon' packages anywhere they can find someone willing to provide them with a name or signature. **This situation has worsened significantly during the coronavirus pandemic.** Please note that we cannot be responsible for lost items where the courier provided 'Proof of delivery' references any individual who is not a member of our staff. The risk of such incidents can be reduced by ensuring that our **full address** (as at the top of the referral form) is clearly stated, as we are the only business operating from number 1. Capper Street. Further labelling the package as 'Urgent Clinical Specimen' or similar, may also help encourage anyone handling it to do so with due diligence.

10) If a specimen is not stored at the current treatment location*. Our test referral form will need to be sent to the sample's location for them to combine with it (complete the sample return address if necessary) and then send on to us. Please note that unless within the same institution, the sample's current custodians will almost invariably require the requesting healthcare professional to also send written consent signed by the patient before they can release the sample to us for analysis.

    *In this scenario, correctly specifying the sample return address is critical. Inadvertently returning samples to the requesting location, because no return address was supplied, may increase the risk of specimens getting lost. Similarly, returning to the original custodians, when the clinical team may wish for additional tests to be undertaken by other providers after we have finished, may result in unnecessary delays as they attempt re-recover the specimen again.