Professionalism and Communication

I. Professional and Communication – Classroom and Workplace
   A. Confidentiality
      Need to maintain confidentiality, whether with patients or fellow classmates

   B. Diversity
      Respect other’s differences

   C. Patient Bill of Rights (Refer to previous materials)

   D. Medical/Legal
      In order to prevent medical errors, TJC has a new standard, “Sentinel Event”:
      Any unexpected death or major permanent loss of function not related to the natural course of the patient’s illness or underlying condition
      Examples – suicide, infant abduction, rape during institutional care, hemolytic transfusion reactions, or surgery on wrong patient
      Report within 45 days, and include root cause analysis and action plan
      These reports are published so that others may evaluate their own practices
      Incorrect patient ID is a significant number of these
      If no patient ID, need two forms of ID

   Terms (need definition)
      Litigation –
      Criminal Lawsuit –
      Civil Lawsuit –
      Tort –
      Malpractice –
      Negligence –
      Informed consent –
      Implied consent –
      Statute of Limitations –
      Risk –

E. Appearance and Behavior
   As evidenced by our Professional Performance Evaluation (PPE) or Clinical Professional Performance Evaluation (CPPE)
   Professionalism is very important
Phlebotomists or techs that obtain specimens set the professional example, since they are the ones that the public sees.

F. Following Procedures

Procedure manuals document the intention of the laboratory to comply with standards of good practice to achieve expected outcomes.

If error occurs, report it, complete incident report, etc. according to institution’s procedures.

Must follow procedure manuals.

G. Desirable Characteristics and Attributes

Dependability, promptness, reliability, etc. (also review textbook)

Compassion

Integrity

Honesty

Flexibility

Work Ethics

(from Central Georgia Technical College)

Attendance: Attends class; arrives/leaves on time; notifies instructor in advance of planned absences. Completes assignments on time; takes exams at scheduled times; completes exams within scheduled time limits. Sometimes called dependability.

Character: Displays loyalty, honesty, trustworthiness, dependability, reliability, initiative, self-discipline, and self-responsibility. Displays academic integrity, trustworthiness, dependability, reliability, initiative, self-discipline, and responsibility.

Teamwork: Respects the rights of others; respects confidentiality; is a team worker; is cooperative; is assertive; displays a customer service attitude; seeks opportunities for continuous learning; demonstrates mannerly behavior in interactions with students, instructor, and others.

Appearance: Displays appropriate dress, grooming, hygiene, and etiquette.

Self-Esteem: Demonstrates a positive attitude; appears self-confident; has realistic expectations of self. Demonstrates problem-solving skills, ability to reason, able to troubleshoot; uses technical support systems appropriately.

Productivity: Follows safety practices; conserves materials; keeps work area neat and clean; follows directions and procedures; makes up assignments punctually; participates. Spends class time on task, follows directions and procedures; completes
and makes up assignments punctually; keeps work area neat and clean. Completes all requirements for the course in a timely manner; follows directions and procedures.

**Organization:** Manifests skill in prioritizing and management of time and stress; demonstrates flexibility in handling change.

**Communication:** Displays appropriate nonverbal (attire, eye contact, body language) and oral (listening, telephone etiquette, grammar) skills. Contacts instructor to report problems; asks appropriate questions related to assignments; interacts with instructor and other students in discussions.

**Cooperation:** Maintains appropriate relationship with instructors and peers; appropriately handles criticism, conflicts, and complaints.

**Leadership:** Displays leadership skills; appropriately handles criticism, conflicts, and complaints; demonstrates problem-solving capability; maintains appropriate relationships with supervisors and peers; follows chain of command.

**Respect:** Deals appropriately with cultural/racial diversity; does not engage in harassment of any kind, respectful of others in written and oral communication.

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**National Phlebotomy Association Guidelines**  
(from the National Phlebotomy Association – has also designated responsibilities for the phlebotomist)

As defined subgroup in the area of providing laboratory service, the phlebotomist will:

1. Represent the Clinical Laboratory or Department of Laboratory Medicine
2. Become knowledgeable in the behavioral sciences and apply that knowledge to human relationships with patients and fellow healthcare team members
3. Maintain accuracy, reliability, and reproducibility of results
4. Respect the Patient’s Bill of Rights
5. Serve within the specified framework of his or her skills as defined by the hospital or laboratory standards of performance and phlebotomist job description

**Code of Ethics**  
(of the American Society for Clinical Laboratory Science, ASCLS)

**Preamble**

The Code of Ethics for ASCLS sets forth the principles and standards by which clinical laboratory professionals practice their profession.

1. **Duty to the Patient**  
   Clinical laboratory professionals are accountable for the quality and integrity of the laboratory services they provide. This obligation includes maintaining individual
competence in judgment and performance and striving to safeguard the patient from incompetent or illegal practice by others.

Clinical laboratory professionals maintain high standards of practice. They exercise sound judgment in establishing, performing, and evaluating laboratory testing.

Clinical laboratory professionals maintain strict confidentiality of patient information and test results. They safeguard the dignity and privacy of patients and provide accurate information to other health care professionals about the services they provide.

II. Duty to Colleague and the Profession
Clinical laboratory professionals uphold and maintain the dignity and respect of our profession and strive to maintain a reputation of honesty, integrity, and reliability. They contribute to the advancement of the professions by improving the body of knowledge, adopting scientific advances that benefit the patient, maintain high standards of practice and education, and seeking fair socioeconomic working conditions for members of the professions.

Clinical laboratory professionals actively strive to establish cooperative and respectful working relationships with other health professionals with the primary purpose of ensuring a high standard of care for the patients they serve.

III. Duty to Society
As practitioners of an autonomous profession, clinical laboratory professionals have the responsibility to contribute from their sphere of professional competence to the general well-being of the community.

Clinical laboratory professionals comply with relevant laws and regulations pertaining to the practice of clinical laboratory science and actively seek, within the dictates of their consciences, to change those which do not meet the high standards of care and practice to which the profession is committed.

Summary
In summary, ethical conduct can be expressed in routine behavior by the phlebotomist if he or she:

1. Is polite to patients, regardless of circumstances
2. Does not discuss patient’s ailments with them
3. Does not discuss the respective merits of the various forms of therapy
4. Never prescribes
5. Does not discuss the physician with the patient
6. Keeps appropriate records of specimen collection as described in institutional policy
7. Is alert to hazards for patient and other members of the health care team

When considering the implications of ethical behavior, the concepts of honesty, integrity, and regard for the dignity of other human beings continue to be the personal foundations for professional codes.

**Pledge to the Profession**
(of the American Society for Clinical Laboratory Science, ASCLS)

As a clinical laboratory professional, I strive to:

- Maintain and promote standards of excellence in performing and advancing the art and science of my profession;
- Preserve the dignity and privacy of patients;
- Uphold and maintain the dignity and respect of our profession;
- Seek to establish cooperative and respectful working relationships with other health professionals; and
- Contribute to the general well-being of the community.

I will actively demonstrate my commitment to these responsibilities throughout my professional life.

*Approved July 1995, ASCLS*

**II. Overview of Laboratories, POCT**

**A. Automation**

Benefits – reduction in error, improved safety, faster turn-around time, partially alleviating staff shortages

Term – CALS – completely automated laboratory system

There are various types of instruments available for all departments

Some departments are heavily automated, such as Chemistry; others have little automation, such as Immunohematology

**B. Point-of-Care and Waived Testing**

POCT – Point of Care Testing – lab assays performed near patient (e.g. bedside)

Criteria – cost, turn-around time, ease, minimal QC, etc.

Non-automated – manual, rapid-testing methods

Instrument-based

Want compatibility with LIS
Waived – simple procedures with little chance of negative outcomes if performed inaccurately

Unprocessed specimens (e.g. whole blood, urine, swabs)
Also Molecular testing – PCR, Southern Blot, Western Blot

Note: POCT ≠ Waived, but POCT could be Waived and Waived could be POCT

CLIA – Requires inspection every two years of moderate and high complexity testing labs
TJC/JCAHO inspects/accredits labs, and accepts other organizations that also inspect labs, such as CAP and COLA
Labs not inspected by these three are then inspected by CLIA (CMS has state inspectors for those just seeking CLIA accreditation only)
Waived/POCT/PPM are not routinely inspected, but a certain number are inspected to ensure compliance or check a complaint, and personnel competency should be demonstrated periodically

C. LIS (Laboratory Information Systems)
Terms:
- LAN – local area network
- HIS – hospital information system
- WANs – wide area networks
- HL7 – health level 7 – used for financial and medical record information
- LIS – laboratory information system
Can be used to track specimens, for analytical functions

D. Role of Phlebotomists, CLA/CA, MLTs

Phlebotomists – can obtain specimens of all kinds, and do some POCT testing; more discussed later in course. Also, other duties as designated by employer.

CLA – can obtain specimens of all kinds, do waived/POCT testing, assay quality controls (and plot, track if out), perform maintenance, put specimens on analyzer – all are a big help if short-staffed.

MLTs – can perform all of the above, and also report out results from instruments (although generally, they do not commonly obtain specimens.)