



# Laboratory Services, Billing, and Coding Integrity Policy

Effective Date: 01/01/2026

## **Purpose**

This policy outlines the procedures for laboratory testing ordered through Bridge Family Practice, clarifies patient responsibilities when using outside laboratories, and ensures compliance with billing and coding regulations.

## **Policy Statement**

Bridge Family Practice performs all in-house laboratory testing through **PathGroup**, our designated laboratory partner. All specimens collected in our office are processed and billed directly by PathGroup.

If a patient requires or prefers to complete laboratory testing at an outside laboratory—such as LabCorp, Quest Diagnostics, or another facility—due to insurance requirements or personal preference, the patient must **inform their provider in advance** so that the appropriate external lab orders can be generated.

## **Billing Responsibility for Laboratory Services**

All laboratory services, whether completed:

- In-house through PathGroup, or
  - At an outside laboratory of the patient's choice
- are **billed separately** from Bridge Family Practice.

Bridge Family Practice:

- Does **not determine** laboratory pricing
- Cannot adjust, reduce, or modify laboratory balances
- Cannot intervene in laboratory billing disputes
- Has no authority over what insurance carriers choose to cover or deny

Patients must contact:

- Their insurance carrier for coverage questions, and
- The laboratory's customer service department for billing questions or disputes.

## Insurance Coverage & Patient Responsibility

Insurance carriers determine:

- What laboratory tests are covered
- What portion of the cost is the patient's responsibility
- Whether prior authorization is required
- Whether a specific laboratory must be used for coverage

Patients are responsible for verifying their own coverage requirements and ensuring they use an approved laboratory if their plan restricts lab services.

## Coding Integrity for Laboratory Orders

Bridge Family Practice providers include all **appropriate and medically necessary ICD-10 diagnosis codes** when ordering laboratory work. Codes are based on:

- The patient's medical history
- The conditions discussed during the visit
- The provider's clinical judgment
- Documentation in the medical record

The clinic will **not add, remove, or alter** diagnosis codes for the purpose of obtaining insurance coverage. Altering codes to secure coverage is considered **insurance fraud**, and Bridge Family Practice maintains a strict zero-tolerance policy.

## Patient Guidance

Patients should:

- Inform their provider before the visit or during the appointment if they need labs sent to an outside facility
- Contact their insurance carrier for coverage details
- Contact the laboratory directly for billing questions
- Understand that laboratory charges are separate from office visit charges
- Recognize that Bridge Family Practice cannot change laboratory bills or coverage outcomes

## Authority & Enforcement

This policy is strictly enforced.

No insurance representative, laboratory, or external party may override or alter this policy.

Sincerely,

**Bridge Family Practice Management & Care Team**

Bridge Family Practice

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