

## **PROTOCOL ON THE USE OF NON-PARTICIPATING LABORATORY SERVICES**

- This Protocol is adopted by UnitedHealthcare and all its affiliates. This Protocol supplements the provisions of the Physician, Health Care Professional, Facility and Ancillary Provider Administrative Guide and all other relevant UnitedHealthcare affiliate provider manuals to clarify the requirements pertaining to the use of non-participating laboratory services.
- This Protocol applies to all participating physicians and health care professionals, and it applies to all laboratory services, clinical and anatomic, ordered by physicians and health care professionals.
- **This Protocol does not apply to laboratory services provided by physicians in their offices.**
- This Protocol does not apply where the physician bears financial risk for laboratory services.

### **Requirement to Use Participating Laboratories:**

UnitedHealthcare maintains a robust network of more than 1500 national, regional and local providers of laboratory services. These participating laboratories provide a comprehensive range of laboratory services on a timely basis to meet the needs of the physicians participating in the UnitedHealthcare network. Participating laboratories also provide clinical data and related information to support UnitedHealthcare's Premium Designation program and other clinical quality improvement activities.

### **You are required to refer laboratory services to a participating provider in our network, except as otherwise authorized by UnitedHealthcare or a Payer.**

Participating laboratory providers can be found in the UnitedHealthcare directory online at [www.unitedhealthcareonline.com](http://www.unitedhealthcareonline.com). If you need assistance in locating or using a participating laboratory provider, please contact UnitedHealthcare Network Management. We are eager to support your efforts to direct laboratory services to participating laboratories.

We are aware of the vital importance of laboratory services to your patients, and we are committed to maintaining a laboratory network that is both reliable and affordable. Given the size of this network, we are confident that you will have no difficulty locating and using a participating laboratory.

In the unusual circumstance that you require a specific laboratory test for which you believe no participating laboratory is available, please contact UnitedHealthcare Network

Management and we will work with you to assure that those tests are performed, even if that means the use of a non-participating laboratory.

**Administrative Actions for Non-Network Laboratory Services Referrals:**

UnitedHealthcare network physicians have long demonstrated their commitment to affordable health care by making extensive use of participating laboratories. We anticipate that virtually all participating physicians will be able to easily find a participating laboratory that will meet their needs.

If UnitedHealthcare determines an ongoing and material practice of referrals to non-network laboratory service providers, UnitedHealthcare will promptly notify the responsible physicians of the issue and remind them of their contractual requirements. Moreover, while it is our expectation that these actions will rarely be necessary, please note that, **after March 1, 2007, continued referrals to non-participating laboratories may, after appropriate notice, subject the referring physician to one or more of the following administrative actions:**

- a financial penalty of \$50, which is the amount by which non-par laboratory claims exceed the cost of par laboratory claims, on average;
- a change in eligibility for the Premium Designation and Practice Rewards programs;
- a decreased fee schedule; or
- termination of network participation, as provided in the Participation Agreement.

It is the intent of UnitedHealthcare to work with participating physicians to promote network viability and stability, and to maximize the value of in-network laboratory services. Our expectation is that this collegial approach will continue to succeed, and that the interventions listed above will be applied only in rare circumstances, if at all. Please contact UnitedHealthcare Network Management if you have any questions about making effective use of the participating laboratory network.