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For State District Health Officers.

A SYNOPSIS OF THE POLICIES TO GOVERN EXAMINATION OF SPECIMENS
BY THE WASSERMANN LABORATORY.

It is the policy of the Laboratory to make Wassermann examinations of blood or spinal fluid, without charge, for State, county and city institutions and hospitals, private hospitals and institutions, local boards of health and private physicians, which conform to the rules of the Laboratory.

1-INSTITUTIONS. Arrangements for service for institutions should be made directly with the Laboratory, where the proper information as to the manner of submitting specimens can be given to those in charge of any of these institutions. This is partially covered by the circular letter attached. In the case of private hospitals and private institutions, the Wassermann service is to be granted only under the condition that the hospital or institution make no charge to the patient for such examinations.

2-PRIVATE PHYSICIANS. Private physicians may obtain the service of the Laboratory through (1) local boards of health (2) State district health officers or (3) by sending the patient to the Laboratory on Tuesdays and Thursdays between three and five P.M.

3-LOCAL BOARDS OF HEALTH. In the case of local boards of health it is necessary that the authorized agent of such a board communicate with the Director of Communicable Diseases or the State district health officer, who will announce the policy governing submitting of specimens by local boards. The local board of health must assume the responsibility for the proper use of the Laboratory facilities. This applies particularly to a definite understanding that no physician shall make a charge for any Wassermann test done by the State Laboratory, and that only registered physicians be given the privileges of the Laboratory.

Further, the local board of health must keep a record, in duplicate, of each outfit dispensed, with the name of the physician who obtained it, the name of initials of the patient upon whom the test is to be made, and the date the outfit was obtained. Blank forms for this purpose are furnished by the Laboratory. This duplicate must be returned to the Laboratory on the first of each month. The agent of the local board of health must sign "Wassermann Form 4" when dispensing a Wassermann outfit to a private physician.

When a local board of health, which has not established relations with the Wassermann Laboratory, writes directly to the Laboratory for outfits, a letter will be sent to the agent of such a board of health mentioning the fact that he must consult directly with the district health officer who will give the information above stated with regard to the submitting of specimens. At the same time this letter goes forth, a letter will be written to the State district health officer concerned, advising that he get in touch with the agent of the local board of health who has applied for Wassermann service.

4-STATE DISTRICT HEALTH OFFICERS. When private physicians submit specimens by direction of State district health officers, the State district health officer should also keep similar records as to the name of the physician and initials of the patient, etc., as kept by any local board of health. Further, they should always sign the slip identifying the specimen, "Wassermann Form 4", in order that the Laboratory may know by whose direction the specimen is to be submitted.

5-DIRECTIONS FOR SUBMITTING SPECIMENS BY LOCAL BOARDS OF HEALTH AND DISTRICT HEALTH OFFICERS. Owing to the fact that a large number of specimens submitted by direction of local boards of health and district health officers reach the Laboratory in a hemolyzed condition and are therefore unsuitable for testing we recommend very strongly that the local boards of health acquaint themselves with the method of withdrawing serums from the clots. The method

involved is described in the directions found on the circular letter attached. The Assistant Director will be very glad to demonstrate the method to the agent of any local board of health or to any district health officer who wishes to see it performed. During the summer season more than half of the specimens submitted will probably be unsuitable for testing if sent as whole blood, and we therefore suggest that the method of withdrawing the serum be encouraged as soon as possible with the hope of overcoming this difficulty.

6-WASSERMANN LABORATORY. When for any reason a private physician does not desire to obtain this service through the local board of health or a State District health officer he may send his patient directly to the Laboratory, where he will be bled, on Tuesdays and Thursdays, between 3 and 5 P.M., other times by special appointment.

7-REPORTS TO LOCAL BOARDS OF HEALTH AND STATE DISTRICT HEALTH OFFICERS. In the case of specimens submitted by direction of a local board of health or a State district health officer a duplicate of the report sent to the private physician will be mailed to the district health officer, or to the duly qualified officer of the local board of health, unless the "Wassermann Form 4" accompanying the specimen directs to the contrary. In no event, however, is it the policy of the Laboratory to give reports to non-medical persons connected with public or private institutions, or to deal directly with patients in the matter of advice as to treatment or significance of the Wassermann tests, etc. On the other hand, the Laboratory wishes to cooperate with physicians and institutions by giving advice as to disposition of patients, the interpretation of tests, etc.

Signed

M. J. Rosenau.

W. A. Hinton.