



## “Five Rights of Laboratory Testing” Will Become a Hallmark of Lab Medicine

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*Here in Chicago at the huge HIMSS meeting, people are paying attention to lab testing.*

**Dateline:** Chicago, IL—Most physicians, nurses, and other healthcare workers are quite familiar with the “Five Rights of Medication.” If one innovative healthcare company is successful, soon all these folks will be equally familiar with the newly-articulated “Five Rights of Laboratory Testing,” which emphasizes that every patient is entitled to receive the proper benefits from laboratory testing.

Sunquest Information Systems, Inc. has launched a campaign to promote the Five Rights of Laboratory Testing. The goal is to increase awareness among all healthcare workers of the need to exercise vigilance when ordering laboratory tests and using laboratory test data in patient care decisions.

Like its counterpart in medication, the Five Rights of Laboratory Testing is a patient safety initiative. It is designed to call attention to the patient’s right to have every aspect of laboratory testing occur in an accurate, flawless manner. As described by Sunquest, the Five Rights of Laboratory Testing are:

- ONE, the right lab test, performed on...
- TWO, the right patient, at the...
- THREE, right time, for the...
- FOUR, right indicators, leading to the...
- FIVE, right diagnostic decision.

On the first day of the HIMSS (Healthcare Information and Management Systems Society) conference here in Chicago this week, Sunquest took the wraps off its campaign to publicize and promote the Five Rights of Laboratory Testing. In a presentation about the Five Rights of Laboratory Testing to an audience that included senior hospital and health system administrators, the concepts and goals were received with enthusiasm.

There are many reasons to believe that the Five Rights of Laboratory Testing can catch on and become a comparable

guidepost for patient safety—just like the Five Rights of Medication. This increased attention and understanding of laboratory testing across all of healthcare can be a positive boost for everyone who works in clinical laboratories and anatomic pathology laboratories—from pathologists and Ph.D.s to medical technologists (MTs), clinical laboratory scientists (CLS), medical laboratory technicians and the many phlebotomists and couriers who make up every laboratory’s team of skilled experts.

Your Dark Daily editor is here in Chicago to participate in these activities at HIMSS. Each year, HIMSS is one of the nation’s biggest healthcare meetings and this year is no exception. More than 900 exhibitors and as many as 29,000 attendees are here and a host of new information technology (IT) products and services are being showcased.

There are lots of innovative new things to see. Of course, EMR (electronic medical record) systems are a hot topic right now because of the \$20 billion in federal funding pledged to encourage physicians to implement EMRs in their practices. Many companies and providers are using information technology to improve outcomes while lowering the cost per healthcare encounter. For example, one major health corporation here at HIMSS is showing a product designed to help hospitalists make rounds in the hospital. It combines a work flow function with a clinical decision support capability. Hospitals using beta versions of this product achieved a reduction in mortality of as much as 60% for extended periods!

Also, despite the worsening economy, optimism and energy at the HIMSS gathering was abundant. That’s probably because these are companies and people who believe their products and their services can help change healthcare for the better. They have IT solutions that hospitals, health systems, physicians, and other providers can use to meet such challenges as declining reimbursement and more rigorous patient safety goals.

From that perspective, introduction of the Five Rights of Laboratory Testing is a timely development for the laboratory medicine profession. Should Sunquest succeed in promoting this into a widely-known catch phrase across all of healthcare, it is likely to trigger a positive association for the benefits of laboratory testing.