

## *Pathology and Laboratory Medicine Memorandum*

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To: Physicians and Health Service Directors, Central Zone

From: Dr. David Conrad – Medical Director, Microscopy  
Ms. Beverly Twohig – Esoteric Laboratory Supervisor

Date: February 23, 2017

Subject: **Guidelines for Ordering a Manual Differential**

Proper ordering is a critical aspect of patient care. Ambiguous wording on a requisition can sometimes have multiple meanings, leading to erroneous test ordering and thus impacting patient care.

### **Ordering information**

Please review the following guidelines for ordering a \***Manual Differential** (commonly referred to as a peripheral blood film):

- Please do not use the word “**smear**” which has multiple meanings for our laboratories
- The acceptable way to request a peripheral blood manual differential is to write **Manual Differential** (or **Man Diff**) on the requisition
  - Please note: an automated differential is performed on every CBC/profile and reflexes to a manual differential as warranted

\*A **Manual Differential** is a microscopic assessment of a peripheral blood slide.

- The white blood cells (WBCs) are reviewed to verify the accuracy of the automated differential and assess the WBC morphology. If abnormal WBCs are present a manual differential is performed by counting 100 WBCs
- The red blood cells are reviewed for morphological abnormalities, including color, size, shapes, cytoplasmic inclusions, and distribution
- The platelets are reviewed to confirm the automated platelet count and assess the morphology, including size, granularity, and distribution

If further questions please feel free to contact the Microscopy Laboratory at 902-473-6667.