



<b>Title</b>	<b>Point-of-Care Testing in the Private Sector</b>
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## Aim

To perform an exhaustive literature review that would help provide an appropriate definition for point-of-care testing (POCT), draw up a list of Canada-approved kits and instruments, flag the major issues associated with POCT, and identify the quality-control and quality-assurance measures proposed in Canada and worldwide.

## Conclusions and results

In light of our assessment based on analysis of the major issues raised by POCT and examination of the different measures in place in other provinces and countries to ensure the quality of this practice, AETMIS has identified the principles and conditions that could guide how this practice should be governed in Québec.

As a general rule, POCT should be performed only when justified by the need for a rapid response and in situations requiring immediate test results. This type of testing seems more appropriate for patient monitoring than for disease screening or diagnosis. Point-of-care testing must remain a complementary adjunct to central laboratory services. In an effort to promote high-quality test results and prevent any harm to people's health, the following conditions must be met: 1) Point-of-care testing must be performed in a secure setting that meets strict quality standards, 2) Each step in the testing procedure must be accurately recorded in the medical file and the source of errors at the different testing stages must be identified, 3) The confidentiality of patients' test results and consultations with the health professionals who order the tests must be safeguarded, 4) Responsibilities must be clearly defined in policies and procedures on the use of the different tests, 5) The appropriateness and frequency of tests must be evaluated, and 6) Manufacturers' recommendations, maintenance programs, and hygiene and waste-disposal measures must be strictly observed.

Any decision on prioritizing these tests must be based on a comprehensive analysis of each test, including an economic component to ensure that its benefits outweigh its disadvantages and costs.

## Methods

Literature review (primary scientific studies in MEDLINE, the Cochrane Library 2007, and EMBASE), search with keywords in various websites (laboratories, standards organizations, and provincial Health Ministries), and consultation with experts from the private sector.