

# DRUG TESTING

## Are You Protected?



### THE ESSENTIAL ROLE OF THE MEDICAL REVIEW OFFICER

They must then demonstrate their competence by successfully completing a rigorous certification examination.

An MROCC certified Medical Review Officer assures you and your child that decisions that may impact the rest of your life are placed in the hands of someone with the required knowledge, skills and competencies to properly interpret and report the results of a drug test.

MROCC Certification not only confirms the MRO's expertise, it also provides the distinct recognition that he or she is up to date in the latest rules and regulations, as well as current developments, techniques and issues dealing with medical review officer work.

Thousands of physicians have achieved MROCC certification. A listing of MROCC-Certified physicians may be found at our website, <http://www.mrocc.org>. Or you may contact us directly for additional information.



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positive for legitimate reasons are not wrongly branded as drug users.

### WHO CAN SERVE AS A MEDICAL REVIEW OFFICER?

#### Why a physician?

Medical review of a positive laboratory result typically requires a discussion and review of medical information, including treatments and the use of medications. A physician is able to ask the right questions to confidentially identify information that may help establish a legitimate medical explanation.

The evaluation of legitimate medical explanations for a drug test result requires an understanding of medical conditions, substance abuse, physiology, pharmacology, toxicology and metabolism. Physician medical review officers have the required training and competence in these disciplines.



### HOW CAN I BE SURE THAT HE OR SHE IS TRULY QUALIFIED?

#### Why a certified physician MRO?

Medical Review Officers certified by the **Medical Review Officer Certification Council** (MROCC) are licensed physicians (MD or DO) who undergo a specific course of training in substance abuse, clinical aspects of drug test interpretation, proper specimen collection and drug testing laboratory procedures, regulatory issues, and the specific toxicology and pharmacology of substances of abuse.

review process will not violate your *privacy* rights, and most importantly that the *most qualified professional* will perform the interpretation of a positive result. Years of drug testing experience have refined collection procedures to help protect the dignity of the person tested, while maintaining the integrity of the specimen.



You should expect that trained personnel will collect and handle the specimen, and professionals will oversee the process. You should expect that a laboratory with a quality assurance program will analyze the specimen using a second confirmation test for all positive screening tests. Finally, you should expect a review of any positive laboratory result by a certified MRO.

#### Privacy:

The physician MRO does not divulge medical information to your employer or school administration. If there is a legitimate medical explanation, the MRO will only report the result as "negative." Sometimes, however, in cases involving public safety, the MRO might need to report on "work fitness."



The MRO will not divulge any specific medical information without consent of the individual unless required by law to do so (for example when there is a subpoena in a criminal case).

Those responsible for establishing drug testing programs must take care that confidentiality and privacy are not violated, and that those who test

## WHY IS DRUG TESTING SO COMMONLY DONE?



Substance abuse is a major problem in our society, harming not only the individual, but also the safety and security of others. Substance abuse is an expensive problem with significant impact on our nation's economy, thereby affecting us all.



Workplace drug testing is commonly performed to discourage drug abuse and help assure public safety. It is especially important in transportation, security, health care, and the operation of public utilities. Drug tests are increasingly being used by schools and athletic programs to protect our youth. The courts use drug tests to detect use among those in trouble with the law.

Research has demonstrated that employees with positive drug tests have more problems with job performance, absenteeism and workplace accidents. Drug testing has been shown to effectively deter illicit drug use.

## ARE THE TEST RESULTS ACCURATE?

Individuals who do not use drugs or who have legitimate medical explanations for their positive laboratory result must be protected from the devastating impact of a "false positive" test report.

Proper procedures are essential. Highly sophisticated testing technology, with qualified medical oversight and review of the results by a physician "Medical Review Officer" (MRO) will safeguard you and your child from false allegations. The MRO is an essential component in the administration of drug testing programs.

It is crucial that employers, schools and other organizations that require drug tests select a well qualified laboratory versed in the specialized drug testing procedures. Many organizations choose laboratories certified by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA). SAMHSA-certified labs are sometimes required by law. A list of certified labs is posted at <http://workplace.samhsa.gov/ResourceCenter/lablist.htm>.



## HOW ARE TEST RESULTS CLASSIFIED?

→ A "negative drug test" means that no recent use of drugs was detected.

→ A "positive screening drug test" does *not* confirm illicit use of drugs! It merely means that further testing must be done.

→ A "confirmed positive drug test" simply means that the laboratory detected a drug that might indicate illicit use. There could also be a *legitimate medical explanation*. This result should *only* be reported to the MRO. Until the process of medical review is completed, it is *premature* to forward the result to the employer, school administrators or anyone taking action based upon the test result.

→ An "MRO verified positive drug test" means that the positive test confirmed by the laboratory could not be explained by any *legitimate medical explanation*. It also means that the chain of custody for the specimen has been reviewed by the Medical Review Officer to double check that procedures were properly performed. *Only this result should be reported* to the employer, school administrator and anyone else taking action based upon the test result.

## WHAT IS THE DRUG TESTING PROCESS AND HOW IS QUALITY ASSURED?



The first step is **specimen collection**. The collector must be properly trained in special procedures to assure specimen integrity. The specimen should always remain

within eyesight of the person tested until it is sealed with tamper-proof security tape. The specimen is then packaged and shipped to the laboratory along with "chain of custody" paperwork.

The second step is **testing**. The lab examines the specimen container and security tape, ensuring that there are no signs of tampering. A screening test is performed, and if negative, the result is reported. Otherwise, a confirmatory test must be performed using a different, and more sophisticated lab procedure (typically gas chromatography /mass spectrometry) to positively identify the exact chemical compound detected.



The third step is **medical review** of the test results.



The MRO reviews the documentation of the collection process, the chain of custody, procedures performed and the results, and then contacts the individual who was tested. The individual is interviewed by the MRO, who then determines if a legitimate medical explanation exists to explain the result. Only then is the result reported.

Physicians specially trained as MROs are able to make an appropriate decision about the result of a drug test. Interpreting drug test results can be very complex and requires consideration of laboratory technology, drug metabolism, alternative reasons for a positive test, and the ways that some people attempt to avoid detection.



The MRO considers all possible explanations for the laboratory result, including medical conditions and the use of medications, foods or other things that might affect the drug test. The MRO sometimes needs to verify the explanation through a review of prescription or medical records. Drug tests should *never* be reported without such consideration.

## HOW ARE MY RIGHTS OR THOSE OF MY CHILD PROTECTED? WHAT SHOULD I EXPECT?

When you or your child submits to a drug test, you expect that your *dignity* will be preserved, that the