



COOK FAMILY HEALTH CENTER  
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When the Cook Clinic first opened, all our patients were encouraged to have their blood tests drawn at the Clinic, even if the tests had been ordered by a physician outside the Clinic. It was beneficial to the health plan to have the labs done through the Clinic, as we had negotiated savings with Bloomington Hospital to perform these tests. This savings benefited everybody participating in the health plan. We recognized that this was sometimes inconvenient for our patients, as it might mean an extra trip to the Clinic, rather than having their blood drawn when they were in that other doctor's office. This inconvenience was balanced out by the fact that there is no charge to our patients for labs drawn at the Clinic.

A few years ago, Bloomington Hospital (now part of IU Health) came to us with an offer. They said that they would treat any lab drawn on a Clinic patient at one of the IU Health physician offices just as if it had been drawn at the Clinic. So rather than billing our patients' Cook insurance for this lab test, they would just add it to the bill for all the labs that had been drawn at the Clinic. This meant that Clinic patients didn't have to make an extra trip to have labs drawn; Clinic patients didn't have to pay anything for these labs (just as if they'd been drawn at the Clinic); and the health plan didn't have to pay anything more for these labs than they would have if they'd been drawn at the Clinic. This was a good situation for everybody.

Unfortunately, this will be coming to an end. We have recently been informed by IU Health that they can no longer continue this arrangement. Apparently, it is a very manual, very labor intensive (i.e. very expensive) process for IU Health to identify which patients are Cook patients and bill for their labs differently than they do all their other patients. For that reason, they've told us this arrangement will have to end at the end of 2018.

What does that mean for you as a Clinic patient? Basically, a return to how things have worked throughout most of the Clinic's existence. Starting January 1, 2019, if you have a lab drawn at an IU Health physician office, the charge for that lab test will be submitted by IU Health to your health insurance and treated like any other medical expenses, meaning it will be applied towards your deductible, require co-insurance once your deductible is met, etc. The lab tests will no longer be free to you if drawn outside the Clinic at an IU Health physician office. Once again, for any lab test ordered by a non-Clinic provider to have no charge to you, you will need to have blood for that lab test drawn at the Clinic.

Lab draws start at 6:30 a.m. Monday through Friday and Saturdays at 7:30 a.m.

Sincerely,

James Gardner, MD, MBA  
President, COOK® Family Health Center