



SHERIDAN MEMORIAL HOSPITAL

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Introducing the Distinction: Doctor-Ordered Blood Draws vs. Patient-Directed Blood Draws (HealtheLife Blood Draws - formerly called Wellness Blood Draws)

In the ever-changing world of healthcare, it's essential to grasp the different processes involved in the diagnosis and treatment of injury and illness. Like many other healthcare institutions, Sheridan Memorial Hospital (SMH) uses two primary methods for obtaining blood samples: doctor-ordered blood draws and patient-directed blood draws. While both methods have their advantages, it's crucial to distinguish between them to ensure you and your family receive the best possible patient care.

A doctor-ordered blood draw refers to the traditional process where a physician, nurse practitioner, or physician assistant initiates blood work requests based on medical assessment and clinical judgment. This method is typically used when a patient seeks medical attention for a specific medical condition or routine preventive care. The doctor assesses the patient's symptoms, medical history, and other relevant factors to determine necessary tests and then proceeds with doctor-ordered blood tests.

On the other hand, a patient-directed blood draw positions the individual in control of their healthcare journey. In the past, Sheridan Memorial Hospital referred to these as wellness blood draws. They are now a part of the HealtheLife Friday event on the 3rd Friday of each month. Patients who choose this approach actively manage their health by requesting blood tests without a specific referral from a healthcare professional. They may have personal reasons for requesting the tests, such as monitoring existing conditions, tracking health markers, or assessing their overall well-being. Patient-directed blood draws allow you to engage in your healthcare proactively.

There are several critical distinctions between doctor-ordered blood draws and patient-directed blood draws:

1. **Medical Evaluation:** Doctor-ordered blood draws involve a thorough assessment by a qualified healthcare professional who determines the need for specific tests based on their expertise. Patient-directed blood draws, on the other hand, rely on the patient's judgment and motivations.

2. Healthcare Provider Involvement: Doctor-ordered blood draws require a healthcare provider to authorize the tests and interpret the results. Depending on the patient's preference, patient-directed blood draws may or may not involve a healthcare provider.

3. Insurance Coverage: Doctor-ordered blood draws are more likely to be covered by insurance since they are considered medically necessary. Patient-directed blood draws are often self-funded, and individuals should consult their insurance providers for any potential coverage options. Patients are responsible for submitting patient-directed blood draw claims to your insurance company. Medicare doesn't pay for patient-directed blood draws.

4. Contextual Interpretation: Doctor-ordered blood draws provide a professional medical interpretation of the results within the context of the patient's overall health. Patient-directed blood draws often rely on the individual's understanding and involves consulting healthcare providers separately for result interpretation. If you have your blood drawn through SMH HealtheLife Fridays, your SMH doctor has access to these results via our patient portal. Just let your provider know when you have had your blood drawn so they know the results are available for them to review. They will be happy to review them with you at your next appointment.

Both doctor-ordered and patient-directed blood draws serve valuable purposes in healthcare. Doctor-ordered blood draws offer a systematic approach to diagnosis and treatment, relying on the expertise of healthcare professionals. Patient-directed blood draws empower individuals to take control of their health and facilitate personalized health management.

Effective communication and understanding between patients and healthcare providers are essential as healthcare continues to evolve. By fostering collaboration and promoting patient education, we can bridge the gap between these two approaches, improving healthcare outcomes for everyone involved.