



Changing Health Care Delivery Through Point-of-Care (POC) Technologies

Testing at the point of initial contact, or “point-of-care,” rather than at specialized centers or hospitals utilizes state-of-the-art diagnostics and information systems that can be used in the doctor’s office or even at home. Consequently, the use of POC devices can also help patients monitor their wellness and be active participants in preventive medicine.

The POC approach to health care delivery can significantly improve the quality and reduce the cost of health care by:

- Providing earlier diagnosis of disease when treatment is more effective and less costly.
- Making modern medicine available to those who lack access to regular care, such as people in rural settings or developing countries.
- Combining cutting-edge diagnostic and communication technologies to bring patients into more frequent and regular contact with health care providers.

Health care costs can be significantly lowered if testing and diagnosis are done at the point of initial contact between the patient and the health care provider.

- Enabling a patient-centered process with home-based monitoring.

The National Institute of Biomedical Imaging and Bioengineering (NIBIB) is committed to advancing POC testing so that diagnosis and treatment of disease can move quickly from high-cost settings into doctor’s offices and home settings. The NIBIB currently funds a network of four Point-of-Care Technologies Research Centers that target the development of new POC technologies and the rapid integration of these devices into the health care community.

Point-of-care testing is becoming a vital part of our nation’s health care delivery system, and is a key to reducing health care costs while maximizing accessibility for everyone.