

# CSF Specimens: Labeling and Precautions for Prion Testing

## I

### Introduction

*(Why is this important?)*

The **Laboratory Compliance Team** is sharing this communication to reinforce **safe handling and clear labeling of Cerebral Spinal Fluid (CSF) specimens**, especially when **prion testing** is ordered.

## S

### Situation

*(What is the current situation?)*

CSF specimens suspicious for prions are being sent to the laboratory **without proper labeling or packaging**.

- Posing a **safety risk** to the laboratory staff

Do **NOT** send specimens in the Pneumatic Tube System

## B

### Background

*(What is important to know about the background?)*

- Prion testing is a **low-volume but potentially high-risk scenario**, even though transmission risk from CSF is extremely low.
- Prions are **infectious proteins** that lack nucleic acid and cause **fatal** neurodegenerative diseases.

## A

### Assessment

*(What is the evaluation?)  
(Could include costs, risks, etc.)*

CSF specimens are being sent to the lab:

- **Without** pink labels stating – ‘SUSPECTED PRION DISEASE’
- In only **one** specimen bag



## R

### Recommendation

*(What actions need to take place?)*



All samples with suspicion of prions should:

- Be **double** bagged
- Bag is to be labeled with **pink labels** stating – ‘SUSPECTED PRION DISEASE’  
Labels can be obtained from CPA or Surgical Pathology
- Specimen is to be labeled with proper specimen label
- CSF and formalin specimens are not allowed in the PTS