

Drug Screening Methods



A common target behavior that your setting may choose to reinforce via Contingency Management (CM) programming is substance abstinence. Typically, a client demonstrates this target behavior by providing a biological sample, via breathalyzer for alcohol or urine drug screen (UDS) for all other substances. The result of such screening methods can offer **clear documentation** that a particular substance (or group of substances) is absent from the client's system at a particular moment in time.

As drug screening is commonplace in many settings that serve persons with substance use disorders, there is an ever-evolving industry of screening products and services. Notably, **most currently-available drug screening methods have proven reliability**, with respect to test sensitivity (i.e., ability to correctly detect presence of a substance) and specificity (i.e., ability to correctly detect absence of a substance). Yet, those same methods may vary considerably in cost, convenience for staff and clients, and immediacy with which test results are available—all important considerations for implementing CM programming that are likely to be impacted by local needs and resources of a clinical setting. Thus, **there is no 'one-size-fits-all' solution** to recommend concerning drug screening methods.

Instead, a summary of three common UDS methods is offered to inform local decisions about what will best serve the CM programming of individual settings. Such decisions must necessarily balance financial and logistical considerations, including how quickly the test results are available for involved staff to notify and reinforce CM-eligible clientele when appropriate. Depending on an organization's licensure or certification status, the following may be options as drug screening methods:

Testing Option	Implementation Considerations
"Instant" testing (e.g., urine testing cups or oral swabs)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Short wait time for result, enabling more immediate rewarding of clients who have been substance-abstinent• Likely to simplify test to a binary "positive" vs "negative" result• Depending on local licensure/certification, possibly insufficient for insurance billing (or may require other license/certification)
Specimen collection with third-party analysis (e.g., testing occurs offsite at an approved facility)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Wait time may vary, and depend on courier service schedule, laboratory backlog, or longer time required to test sample• Confirmatory testing easier due to "chain of custody" standards• Testing costs may be shifted to insurance provider or laboratory services, and staff time required for test collection may be (if deemed medically necessary) reimbursable
Onsite collection and testing	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Wait time is locally managed, though this increases setting requirements for staffing and equipment• Certification or licensing required (see attached Resource Table)• May be reimbursable via insurance or other means

While it may be helpful to review the listed considerations to inform local decision-making processes, it is strongly recommended that settings additionally **consult with relevant state or federal authorities to ensure compliance** with established regulatory requirements.

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As noted earlier, the drug screening industry is constantly evolving with new products and services continually added to a robust, innovative marketplace. To that end, a selection of web-based resources are included in the resource table below containing additional information related to approved *in vitro diagnostics* (IVD) testing products and methodologies, state and federal entities providing governance and oversight regarding *clinical laboratory improvement amendments* (CLIA), and searchable contact information for local CLIA-certified testing laboratories:

Resource	Description
IVD Over the Counter Database	Database of “home” tests that have been approved or cleared by the FDA for use.
CLIA- Currently Waived Analytes	Database of analytes that are used in test systems that have been “waived,” by regulation for home use. Clicking a specific “substance” in the table will show you approved tests that contain that specific test as well as others (such as in the case of multi substance testing units).
State Agency Contacts	Contact information for State agencies who provide oversight related to specimen testing compliance.
CLIA Section of the CDC website	Website containing information about CLIA ranging from law and regulations to pathways to certification.
CLIA Laboratory Search	Database of CLIA certified laboratories, which may be useful in identifying a testing laboratory near you. Clicking “advanced search” provides fields for city/state/zip.

Notes:
