



# ETOR

## (Electronic Test Orders and Results)

### Origin Story

The United States depends on public health laboratories (PHL) to conduct critical tests to keep our country safe from environmental contaminants, food-borne illnesses and emerging threats. For maximum effectiveness, PHLs need both accurate data and quick, efficient turnaround times for test results.

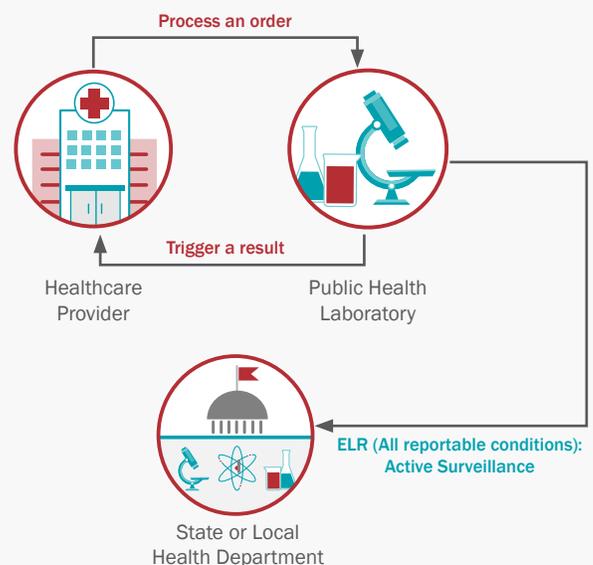
However, many laboratories still rely on outdated methods like mail and fax to exchange data, and error-prone and time-consuming manual processes make it difficult for PHLs to reach the necessary level of efficacy. Many labs struggle with difficulties planning which tests they need to run and tracking specimens.

One public health solution is Electronic Test Orders and Results (ETOR)—a secure data exchange methodology, allowing labs, agencies and health care providers to directly exchange standardized test orders and associated results across different facilities.

### How It Works

With ETOR, labs gain an intuitive, efficient and paperless interface accelerating the transfer of data between submitter and tester. Unlike other forms of electronic exchange ETOR allows bi-directional communication and eliminates many of the manual error-prone processes.

To engage in ETOR, a provider—such as a hospital—requests tests electronically from the laboratory. The laboratory receives the request, which is automatically tied to the specimen they will receive later. Once the lab receives the specimen, the data and information has already been processed and is ready for testing. Once the lab conducts testing, the result is linked to that same order and is reported back immediately to the provider. It sounds simple, but the impact is huge, especially for the public health sector and its intense data requirements. The sooner laboratories receive and process orders, the faster they can return results and improve patient care.



### COVID-19 Response

The coronavirus pandemic underscored the importance of ETOR for effective tracking, faster outbreak and public health emergency responses, and early interventions.

The Association of Public Health Laboratories (APHL) is currently giving a COVID-19-specific web portal to any public health lab that needs it. This portal solution provides a secure, centralized platform that enhances critical and timely communication between laboratory staff, epidemiologists and healthcare providers.

### Additional Reading

[The Public Health Need for ETOR](#)

[www.aphl.org/COVID19-data](http://www.aphl.org/COVID19-data)

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