



Press Release
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Knox Hospital Lab Earns COLA Accreditation

Recognition Reflects Commitment to Quality Testing

KNOX CITY, Texas (October 9, 2026) – Behind many health care decisions is a laboratory result. At Knox County Hospital District, a renewed national accreditation recognizes the work that helps medical providers and patients rely on those results.

Knox County Hospital Laboratory has met the requirements for accreditation by Commission on Office Laboratory Accreditation (COLA), a national laboratory accrediting organization dedicated to promoting quality and patient safety through education and evaluation. In a letter dated Sept. 30, 2026, COLA confirmed the laboratory's successful completion of its accreditation requirements and recognized its staff's commitment to quality testing.

The laboratory has maintained COLA accreditation for more than 20 years reflecting a longstanding commitment to dependable laboratory services for Knox County and surrounding communities.

"Patients may not see everything that happens behind the scenes in our laboratory, but that work is an essential part of their care," said Stephen Kuehler, CEO of Knox County Hospital District. "This accreditation recognizes the attention to detail and commitment our laboratory team brings to serving our patients."

COLA is a medical professional-directed organization that promotes health and safety through laboratory accreditation and educational programs. Its program evaluates laboratories and provides guidance designed to help them meet quality and regulatory requirements.

COLA accreditation considers how a laboratory performs in its everyday operations. Laboratories must meet quality standards, demonstrate continued accuracy through proficiency testing and successfully complete a rigorous on-site survey. The process combines evaluation with education to help laboratory professionals maintain and strengthen the quality of their services.

For patients, that focus on quality supports confidence in an important part of the care they receive. Medical providers use laboratory information alongside a patient's symptoms, medical history and other findings when making decisions about care. Dependable testing helps give those providers information they can use to evaluate a patient's health and determine appropriate next steps.

"Quality laboratory services support the work of our entire medical team," Kuehler said. "When a medical provider orders a test, there is a patient counting on that information. Maintaining these standards is part of our responsibility to that patient and to the community."



The accreditation also recognizes the continuing effort required of laboratory employees. Meeting quality standards is an ongoing responsibility that extends beyond the day of a survey. COLA's approach emphasizes education and continued improvement, helping laboratories make quality a consistent part of their daily work.

In its notification, COLA praised the laboratory staff's dedication and continued support of its standards. The organization also emphasized the connection between a laboratory's commitment to quality, reliable results and patient care.

Accreditation is subject to periodic review. According to COLA's letter, the certificate expires two years after the laboratory's most recent survey, with the next on-site review expected approximately 18 to 24 months after that survey. This continuing review helps keep attention on quality throughout the accreditation cycle.

For a rural hospital district, recognition of this kind also highlights the people who help sustain local health care. Laboratory employees contribute to patient care through work that often takes place outside the public eye, but their efforts remain an important part of the services on which the community depends.

"We are proud of our laboratory staff and grateful for the care they put into their work," Kuehler said. "Our community deserves dependable services close to home. Continuing to meet COLA's requirements reflects our commitment to providing that care."

About Knox County Hospital District

Founded in 1926, Knox County Hospital District provides healthcare for residents of Knox County and surrounding areas. The district offers a wealth of medical services, including 24-hour emergency care, advanced radiology services, a clinical laboratory, home health, physical therapy, long-term care, patient education, and more. For additional information, please call 940-657-3535 or visit www.knoxhospital.org.

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