

July 16, 2005

Dear Transfusion Service Medical Director, Laboratory Manager and Blood Bank Supervisor:

RE: AABB Bulletin #05-02—Notification of Action Required with Positive Bacterial Contamination Testing

Thank you for your continued support of the American Red Cross Biomedical Services. Together, with your help, we strive to meet the needs of the American people for the safest, most reliable and most cost effective blood supply possible.

This letter is to bring to your attention recent recommendations from the AABB regarding management of positive bacterial testing results and the associated blood donors. These recommendations supplement AABB standard 5.1.5.1, implemented March 1, 2004, that requires the *limitation* and *detection* of bacterial contamination in all platelet components.

The bulletin clarifies that the requirement for blood collection facilities to notify donors if any medically-significant abnormality detected as a result of laboratory testing (AABB standard 5.2.2) applies to bacterial screening of platelet components. While the American Red Cross has implemented procedures for donor notification for the culture testing it employs for single donor platelets (SDP), donor notification requirements also apply to platelet bacterial screening performed by your hospital laboratory.

We need to work together to ensure that this happens, and ask your cooperation with the following request:

- If you are screening with a surrogate test (e.g. pH or glucose) and obtain an unacceptable result, please either perform a confirmatory Gram's stain and culture at your facility (both tests are important), or contact us and return the component so that we can obtain these tests prior to taking any further actions with the donor or co-components.
- If you are screening with a culture-based test, please notify us as soon as you have an initial positive result to ensure that the donor is not allowed to donate and co-components are not transfused until confirmatory testing has been completed.
- If you are screening with a Gram's stain or similar staining method, please notify us as soon as you have a positive result to ensure that the donor is not allowed to donate and co-components are not transfused until confirmatory testing has been completed. Obtain a confirmatory culture at your facility or contact us and return the component so that we can obtain a culture prior to taking any further actions with the donor.

In all cases, since our counseling and follow-up with the donor will be based in part on the identification of the contaminating organism, please share your Gram's stain, culture and identification results with us as they become available.

The American Red Cross believes the implementation of bacterial limitation and detection will add another layer of safety to the blood supply. Co-component interdiction and donor re-evaluation are important adjuncts to platelet component screening. Donor notification is required for any suspected bacterial infection with a possible pathogenic organism. It is our policy to inform the donor of these results, counsel them about potential medical significance and recommend that they see a physician.

Please direct your comments, questions and concerns to the Medical Office at 1-800-564-1947 or contact your account manager at 909-859-7280. Thank you in advance for your cooperation.

Sincerely yours,



Charles Wilcox
Chief Executive Officer