

SAINT FRANCIS HOSPITAL LABORATORY UPDATE

DATE: March 2, 2006

TO: Medical Staff

FROM: Tamara Chaney, MD, Microbiology Medical Director
Sara Hobbie, MT(ASCP)SM, Microbiology Supervisor

SUBJECT: Immunochemical Fecal Occult Blood Test

Colorectal cancer is the second leading cause of cancer deaths in the United States. The Centers for Disease Control feel as many as 60% of these deaths could be prevented if everyone 50 years or older were regularly screened.

Traditionally, such screening has been performed manually with guaiac-based occult blood tests. Unfortunately, the compliance rate of patients collecting samples for screening has been poor. This shortfall in compliance has largely been due to dietary restrictions that are necessary with guaiac-based tests, as well as aesthetic reasons associated with stool specimen collection.

Effective March 7, 2006, Saint Francis Hospital Laboratory will be offering an alternative to the older Guaiac occult blood test. **The Immunochemical Fecal Occult Blood test (ifobt) was developed to detect *human* hemoglobin in stool.** It is not subject to false reactions with foods, medications or vitamins; therefore, no previous patient preparation is required. The new proprietary collection device reduces three sample collections down to one. The less expensive transport device can be given to the patient or the sample can be collected by the physician during routine digital exams, eliminating the need to send the collection device home.

While the cost of the new test is higher, the reimbursement is also higher. The Center for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) has acknowledged the need to improve the quality of care provided to Medicare beneficiaries by making available emerging technologies that are demonstrated to be clinically useful. We will continue to offer the Guaiac testing to those who feel they need time to transition to the new testing.

If you would be interested in offering this improved technology, please contact Sam Sylvester at 918-494-6511 (office) or 918-629-3328 (cell) for specimen collection containers and instructions.

Any questions regarding the test may be directed to Dr. Tamara Chaney at 918-494-1420 or Sara Hobbie at 918-494-1320.