

New Lab Equipment Helps Patients with Quicker Results

December 18 2014 2:28 PM



Chansea Hanlon of the AMH Lab places some samples in the new chemistry analyzer.

ALTON, IL -- The Alton Memorial Hospital Lab recently completed a major upgrade to its chemistry analyzer.

The new analyzers incorporate technology that decreases the turnaround time of critical lab tests, allowing for the physician to implement treatment protocols sooner, improve patient care, and decrease wait times in the Emergency Department.

“This implementation of advanced analytical instrumentation and high-tech computer systems reaffirms Alton Memorial Hospital’s commitment to making medicine better close to home,” says Ruth Tepen, supervisor of the AMH Lab. “The analyzers are directly connected with a lab information system so that results directly feed into the computer for reporting, thus eliminating the possibility of clerical errors. The instruments incorporate a multitude of test methods ranging from a general chemistry test such as glucose to a more complex cardiac marker such as Troponin.”

The Lab is also installing a new information system that allows easy communication to all BJC hospitals. The new system will improve reporting results, with alerts set up to warn the technical staff of possible issues with specimen collection and analyzer function prior to the reporting of patient test results.

“This will allow errors with test results to be caught prior to the result being posted on the patient’s medical record,” Tepen says. “The new system also has blood collection lists and routes allowing for lab test orders to decrease the number of venipunctures our patients must have.”

Lab results will be able to be viewed by physicians regardless of the BJC hospital at which the patient was treated or had lab testing performed. This allows for a more uniform streamlined approach to patient care and fewer phone calls to obtain information required for care.

Microbiology will have a new system in place that will incorporate “algorithm analysis,” in which the system steps the technical staff through each step required for bacteria identification.

“The system alerts the technical staff of critical values so that immediate notification can be made to the nurse or physician,” says Myra Anderson, Microbiology technical coordinator. “Real time reporting of culture results will occur with downstream computer systems for immediate review of results by physicians.”

A co-path computer system for the Histology/Cytology department will allow for standardization between AMH and Christian Hospital.

“This also allows for easy access for a pathologist at both facilities to view cases both, present and past, when making a diagnosis,” says Allison Schaffer, technical

coordinator of Histology at AMH. “This system will allow separate send-out reports and original requisitions to be scanned into the computer for decreased paperwork and easy access for the physician.”