



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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GULF COAST REGIONAL BLOOD CENTER ADOPTS NEW MPX TEST FOR MORE EFFICIENT BLOOD SCREENING

Single Test Screens for HIV, Hepatitis B, Hepatitis C

HOUSTON (Oct. 23, 2009) – Gulf Coast Regional Blood Center has adopted a new system that screens donated blood for HIV, Hepatitis B and Hepatitis C in a single, automated test – enabling a more streamlined blood screening process and helping ensure an even safer blood supply.

The Blood Center’s National Donor Testing Services (NDTS) Laboratory successfully implemented the Cobas® Taq Screen MPX system from Roche Molecular Diagnostics on Sept. 1. The test, which is not intended for use as an aid in diagnosis, is designed to further increase the safety of the blood supply by identifying infections earlier than traditional serology tests.

“Having automation is a major advancement for us,” says Caron Cousins Baker, Chief Technical Officer for The Blood Center. “The automated features of the MPX and the improved throughput have improved our daily workflow.”

The MPX reagents and test system allow for the simultaneous detection of the virus for Hepatitis C (HCV), Hepatitis B (HBV) and HIV-1. In addition the MPX has been approved for the detection of HIV-1 Group M RNA, HIV-1 Group O RNA and HIV-2 RNA in human plasma.

Gulf Coast Regional Blood Center has worked with Roche Molecular Diagnostics since the mid-1990s, when the first nucleic acid test (NAT) for the detection of infectious disease was introduced as part of the donor screening profile. The Blood Center’s technologists performed many of the tests that provided data needed to gain the FDA’s approval of the MPX system.

“Our long-standing partnership with The Blood Center has been very valuable to Roche,” says Whitney Green, Roche Diagnostics’ senior vice-president of the U.S. Molecular Diagnostics division. “We share the objective of making sure the blood supply is the safest, most abundant possible for the patients.”

ABOUT US: Gulf Coast Regional Blood Center is asking its donors to ***Commit for Life***. It takes three simple steps: 1) Donate once per quarter; 2) allow The Blood Center to contact you; and 3) spread the word, encouraging others to ***Commit for Life***.

Commit for Life®

1400 La Concha Lane, Houston, Texas 77054 • 713-790-1200 • 1-888-482-5663 • www.giveblood.org

A Nonprofit Community Blood Center and Member of America’s Blood Centers, aaBB and the Texas Medical Center.



Gulf Coast Regional Blood Center is the primary supplier of blood components to more than 170 hospitals and health care facilities in a 26-county Texas Gulf Coast region.

Donors must be at least 17 years of age, weigh a minimum of 110 pounds and be in good general health. Individuals who are 16 years old, at least 122 pounds, in good general health and have their parents' consent also may donate. The donation process is simple, taking only about one hour.

For additional information, call 1(888) 482-5663, or visit The Blood Center's Web site at www.giveblood.org. Gulf Coast Regional Blood Center is an independent, nonprofit blood center that is not affiliated with the American Red Cross.

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