

DATE:	17 March 2025
TO:	High Prairie Health Complex Physicians, Nursing and Allied Healthcare Professionals
FROM:	Melanie Hehn, Manager North Central Zone
RE:	Transfer of Transfusion Medicine Testing from High Prairie Health Complex to Grande Prairie Regional Hospital

PLEASE POST OR DISTRIBUTE AS WIDELY AS APPROPRIATE

Key Message

- Effective April 1, 2025, all Transfusion Medicine testing – including Type and Screen and Crossmatches – will be permanently relocated from the High Prairie Health Complex Laboratory to the Grande Prairie Regional Hospital (GPRH) Transfusion Medicine Laboratory.
- This change will not affect patient care. Blood products will continue to be available at the High Prairie site, ensuring patients can still receive transfusions when needed. Recruiting technologists for general lab and x-ray services at the High Prairie Health Complex has been successful, but attracting specialists in Transfusion Medicine has been challenging due to the low volume of related procedures. Moving this testing to Grande Prairie will help High Prairie focus on sustaining its high-demand general lab and x-ray services, making it easier to recruit staff without requiring specialized Transfusion Medicine training.

Background

- The Provincial Transfusion and Transplantation Medicine program is working to classify all facilities into specific categories based on several factors including average testing activity, current inventory levels, distance from a hub site, laboratory staff FTE and site clinical programs (with focus on traumas, vascular surgery, high risk obstetrics and oncology). Due to Medical Laboratory Technologist shortages and the difficulty in recruiting staff with specialized Transfusion Medicine training in High Prairie, the decision has been made to transition the High Prairie Health Complex to a non-testing/stock and dispense only classification. The GPRH Transfusion Medicine Laboratory will provide all testing support.

How this will impact you

- Type and Screen and Crossmatch testing will no longer be performed on site. Patients requiring routine/non urgent transfusions will have their Type and Screen collected and sent via routine courier to the GPRH Laboratory. GPRH Transfusion Medicine Laboratory staff will perform all testing and units will be crossmatched electronically or serologically as appropriate, to the inventory in High Prairie or transported via courier from GPRH to High Prairie.
 - Urgent transfusion testing may be sent using a stat courier system. The need for urgent transfusion testing must be clearly communicated to the laboratory staff. Pathologists with expertise in transfusion medicine will continue to provide support 24/7.
- Uncrossmatched group O Red Blood Cells will be available on site for urgent transfusions in which a patient is unstable or symptomatic and bleeding. The lab will continue to store and issue fibrinogen and prothrombin complex concentrates for bleeding patients when clinically indicated.
 - NOTE: Historical checks will be performed before and after issuing red cells to determine if the patient has a history of antibodies or special transfusion requirements. The ordering physician will be notified if required.



Action Required

- Ensure all routine, urgent or stat transfusion requests are clearly communicated to the High Prairie laboratory staff so they can ensure the appropriate transport measures are taken – for the type and screen and crossmatched units to and from Grande Prairie Regional Hospital – and that units will be available.
- Ensure the Maternal Newborn Child and Youth Strategic Clinical Network (MNCY SCN) recommendations for type and screen orders in low-risk obstetrics are being applied.
- Ensure routine outpatient transfusions (including IVIG or other blood products) are ordered and the transfusion date is communicated to the High Prairie laboratory staff so that they can arrange to have the appropriate product available on site for the appointment.

Effective April 1, 2025

Questions/Concerns

- Melanie Hehn, Manager, North Central Zone
- Allahna Elahie, Transfusion Medicine Safety Officer, North Zone
- Nada Nsier, Manager, North Sector, Transfusion and Transplantation Medicine Provincial Program
- Dr. David Beyer, North Zone Consultant Pathologist
- Dr. Susan Nahirniak, Medical Director, Provincial Transfusion and Transplantation Medicine

Approved by

- Dr. Kaila Crawford, Associate Sector Medical Director (Rural), North
- Dr. Susan Nahirniak, Medical Director, Provincial Transfusion and Transplantation Medicine