

Date: September 26, 2013

To: South Zone East
Physicians, Nurses, Laboratory Directors and Managers

From: AHS Laboratory Services – South Zone East

Re: Change to Reporting of Body Fluid Cell Counts

PLEASE POST OR DISTRIBUTE AS WIDELY AS APPROPRIATE

Key Messages:

- **Effective October 1, 2013**, body fluid red blood cell (RBC) and white blood cell (WBC) counts will be reported as cells $\times 10^6/L$ instead of the current cells $\times 10^9/L$.
- This change applies to the following fluids:
 - Cerebrospinal fluid (CSF)
 - Synovial
 - Pericardial
 - Pleural
 - Peritoneal (Ascites)
- **Peripheral blood cell (CBC) counts and differentials are excluded from this reporting change.**

Fluid WBC count results will also include reference ranges:	
Fluid:	Fluid WBC Reference Range:
CSF	Adults: $0-4 \times 10^6/L$ Neonates: $0-19 \times 10^6/L$ Viral or Early Bacterial Meningitis: $100-1000 \times 10^6/L$ Typical Bacterial Meningitis: $>1000 \times 10^6/L$
Synovial	Normal Range: $0-199 \times 10^6/L$ Non-inflammatory: $200-2000 \times 10^6/L$ Inflammatory: $2000-100,000 \times 10^6/L$ Septic: $>50,000 \times 10^6/L$
Pericardial, Peritoneal, Pleural	Transudate: $<1000 \times 10^6/L$ Exudate: $>1000 \times 10^6/L$ Spontaneous Bacterial Peritonitis: $>500 \times 10^6/L$

Why this is important:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reporting units of cell $\times 10^6/L$ will better match reporting units of fluid cell counts in texts/literature. • cells $\times 10^6/L$ is equivalent to cells/uL or cells/mm³. • Cell counts will no longer be reported to three (3) decimal places eliminating the potential for the decimal place to be mistaken for a comma. eg. A cell count previously reported as 45.000 $\times 10^9/L$ will report as 45,000 $\times 10^6/L$. • Body fluid cell count reporting units will be standardized across the South Zone. • Reference ranges will inform the clinician of expected values for better diagnosis and treatment.

Action Required:

- Take note of reporting units and reference ranges when interpreting body fluid cell count and differential results.

Inquiries and feedback may be directed to:

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This bulletin has been reviewed and approved by:

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