Hagerstown Medical Laboratory

Date: December 3, 2009

To: Medical Staff, Laboratory, and Key Personnel

From: John G. Newby, M.D., Laboratory Director

RE: **Changes in Susceptibility Testing Protocols for Positive Blood Culture for Coagulase Negative Staphylococcus**

Rapid identification of Coagulase Negative Staphylococci (CNS) has been facilitated by the PNA/FISH test which was implemented at Hagerstown Medical Laboratory three months ago. This test can differentiate Coagulase Negative Staphylococci from *Staphylococcus aureus* allowing the clinician to make appropriate treatment decision on the day the blood cultures become positive. Appropriate timely treatment can then be based on clinical findings.

Effective December 1, 2009. Hagerstown Medical Laboratory will be changing its protocol for susceptibility testing for positive blood cultures as follows:

- Since ninety-eight percent of blood cultures positive for CNS represent contamination, we will eliminate susceptibility testing of CNS isolated from **one bottle** of a multiple bottle set of blood cultures.
- If more than one bottle of a multiple bottle set of blood cultures or a blood culture from a neonate grows CNS, full identification and susceptibility testing will be automatically performed.
- The microbiology laboratory will hold *presumed contaminant CNS isolates* for five days. The clinician must call the Microbiology Laboratory directly at (301) 665- 4912, if susceptibility testing is desired on these organisms. A comment will be appended to affected blood culture reports stating:

  "This blood culture isolate grew only in one bottle from a multiple bottle set of blood cultures. This may represent a contaminant. This testing has been performed at the request of the ordering physician."

The laboratory is continuously striving to utilize all available resources to provide patients and clinicians accurate and relevant test information. We believe that these changes will increase the quality of results we provide. We welcome your feedback. Please feel free to contact me at (301) 665-4900 or Chanhpheng Phengvath "CP", Microbiology Technical Specialist at (301) 665- 4936 with any questions or comments.