

## First HIPAA-compliant, online antibody registry in U.S. assists hospitals in preventing life-threatening blood-transfusion reactions

By Deb Turpin

In June 2008, the first antibody registry in the United States was launched for the Community Blood Center of Greater Kansas City (MO). The online registry is a resource for area transfusion services, which contains names of patients with their known alloantibodies and antibodies identified. Containing more than 6,000 patient records, the registry is a lifesaving medical and technological advancement for transfusion services and patients. By reducing the amount of time needed to test blood, the registry allows blood transfusions to take place quickly; tracks patient records despite changes

in hospital, healthcare provider, or insurance carrier; and provides an efficient alternative to traditional paper.

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"On the registry's first day of activity, a hospital blood bank discovered a transfusion patient had a complex antibody profile. Ordinarily, several hours would be spent identifying the antibody, but the Antibody Registry provided the Community Blood Center with crucial information in a timely manner," says Vicki Schwickerath, manager of hospital relations at the Community Blood Center. "The hospital saved vital time, and the patient avoided a potentially life-threatening incompatibility."

During the first year of use, the Antibody Registry was accessed more than 3,100 times. Sixty-eight hospitals viewed records, and 13 of these hospitals had the ability to enter their own patient antibodies for further documentation. Hospitals report that they have reaped the benefits of a centralized database, available 24 hours a day, which can access crucial information with the click of a mouse.

Additional benefits of the registry include

- prevention of delayed transfusion reactions;
- decreased amount of required blood samples;
- decreased turnaround time for work-ups;
- reduced risk of hemolytic transfusion reactions;
- faster cross matches;
- less reliance on patients' memory of prior treatments; and
- instant access to records from other facilities.

The Community Blood Center credits the Antibody Registry with savings in time and money as well as lives. A partnering hospital states that the Anti-



body Registry cuts down on calls that have to be made to Community Blood Center to check on a patient. Currently, 72 hospitals in Kansas and Missouri have access to the Antibody Registry. Each week, approximately 120 blood bankers at these hospitals access the Antibody Registry and view 20 to 30 patient records on average.

The password-protected and encrypted system meets HIPAA and HITECH standards with multitiered security levels. Sensitive patient information is protected through varied levels of access, while all user activity is time stamped and recorded. A double-entry system reduces the possibility of data-entry error. The Community Blood Center's staff is able to add patient information and participating hospitals view the records and add notes via a Web browser. The Blood Center's staff assigns privileges to select individuals and posts important medical memos, recall information, hospital services, and pricing information in one central location. The user-friendly interface allows authorized users to quickly locate and retrieve a patient's test records from any participating blood bank or transfusion service. □

Deb Turpin is CEO of River City Studio in Kansas City, MO, which offers the Web-based Antibody Registry application to blood centers around the United States. Visit [www.antibodyregistry.com](http://www.antibodyregistry.com) for more information.