

**TO:** Physicians, Housestaff, and Nurses

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**DATE:** March 25, 2008

**SUBJECT:** Discontinuation of Bleeding Time Test

Effective April 1, 2008, the bleeding time test will no longer be offered by the VCU Clinical Pathology Laboratory.

The bleeding time has been historically used as a screening test for primary or acquired disorders of platelet function. However, there are many limitations inherent in the procedure, and a position statement by both of the College of American Pathologists and the American Society of Clinical Pathologists concluded that the bleeding time was not an effective screening test for hemostatic diseases (Peterson et al. Arch Surg. 1998;133:134-139). Many major medical centers have thus abandoned use of this test and the templates used for the test are no longer available from our medical suppliers.

A thorough patient and family history of bleeding remains the mainstay of clinical evaluation for the risk of excessive bleeding. However, the VCU Hemostasis Laboratory will continue to offer the platelet function analyzer (PFA-100) assay for the initial *in vitro* evaluation of suspected abnormalities of platelet function on blood specimens. The PFA-100 is only performed on a scheduled basis, Monday through Friday, 8:30 AM to 3:00 PM. The specimen requirement is two, 4.5 mL, light blue-top citrate tubes. The blood samples for the PFA-100 must be carefully drawn, properly labeled, **well-mixed with the anticoagulant solution, and hand-delivered to the Hemostasis Laboratory within one hour of collection.** They cannot be refrigerated or passed through the pneumatic tube system. Additional information about the PFA-100 is available on the Hemostasis Laboratory web site, at <http://www.pathology.vcu.edu/clinical/coag/index.html>.

Please contact the Coagulation Laboratory at (804) 628-5736 should you have any questions.