

For Immediate Release

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SCBB Provides Cutting Edge Technology To Reduce Patient Transfusion Reactions Resulting in less hospital time and lower odds for postoperative infections

Sarasota, FL- Suncoast Communities Blood Bank (SCBB) announced today, in conjunction with Sarasota Memorial Health Care System's Blood Usage Committee, that the blood bank will adopt a new procedure currently considered to be cutting edge in the transfusion industry. The procedure is the reduction of white blood cells in units of red blood, creating "leukoreduced" blood, that lowers the incidence of transfusion reactions and postoperative infection. The goal is ultimately to reduce the patient's hospitalization time.

In 2005-2006, the Sarasota Memorial Blood Usage Committee began a review of the literature and findings from medical centers such as Johns Hopkins, Yale, Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center and others. The committee also invited a national expert, Dr. Timothy Hannon, from St. Vincent's Hospital in Indianapolis, to speak to physicians. He visited Sarasota several times over the past three years, and presented the reduction in transfusion reactions and cost-saving results from a number of hospitals across the U.S. and Canada that have made this change.

"As the transfusion service provider for Sarasota Memorial, we have seen an increased need for these blood products over the last few years," says Chris Flood, Directory of Laboratory Services for SCBB. "In the year 2000, about 20% of the blood used at SMH was leukoreduced. This year about 40% of transfusion products are requested to be leukoreduced. We will soon be transitioning to 100% 'universal leukoreduced red blood cells' for transfusion in all the hospitals we serve."

What is Leukoreduced Blood?

White blood cells fight infection and foreign organisms, but they do not benefit the recipient of a blood transfusion. Leukoreduced blood has most of the white blood cells filtered out of the blood as soon as possible after collection. Many medical experts believe that transfusing patients with leukoreduced blood reduces the risk of mild transfusion reactions, such as fever and chills, or other more serious reactions.

White blood cells are also known as leukocytes, thus the term "leukoreduced." A specially designed filter is attached to each blood bag using a method that complies with U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) regulations. Testing is then performed on the blood product prior to transfusion to ensure the remaining white blood cells are below the prescribed level.

Benefits of Leukoreduced blood

- Reduces the patient's reaction to donated white blood cells.
- Shortens the patient's hospital stay.
- Lowers the odds of postoperative infection.
- Reduces the transmission of cytomegalovirus (CMV).
- Is the treatment of choice for cancer and pediatric patients.

"We are pleased to work with the SCBB to help ensure that patients receive the safest and most advanced blood products," says Jennifer Mayer, MD, head of the Sarasota Memorial Blood Usage Committee and medical director of Sarasota Memorial's inpatient pediatrics services. "Individuals of all ages will truly benefit from this innovative procedure, which will help enhance our quality of care."

Who We Are

Suncoast Communities Blood Bank is a 501(c) (3) not-for-profit community supported blood bank that has served Sarasota, Charlotte and DeSoto Counties since 1949. Suncoast Communities Blood Bank (SCBB) is the sole provider of blood and blood services to five hospitals: Sarasota Memorial, Doctors Hospital, DeSoto Memorial Hospital and HealthSouth Rehabilitation Hospitals. In addition, SCBB provides blood to Bayflite medical helicopter and serves as the transfusion service for Sarasota Memorial Hospital, transfusing approximately 8,000 patients per year. Our blood drive sponsors hold more than 1,000 blood drives per year and SCBB collects over 27,000 units of blood annually from over 14,000 donors. For more information call 1-866-97BLOOD or visit www.scbb.org.

About Sarasota Memorial

Sarasota Memorial Health Care System is an 806-bed regional medical center with specialized expertise in heart, vascular, cancer and neuroscience services. A full-service facility, SMHCS includes a network of outpatient services as well as home health and long-term care among its many programs. Sarasota Memorial is the only provider of obstetrical services and Level III neonatal intensive care in Sarasota County. The hospital, founded in 1925, has been included for five consecutive years in the prestigious *U.S. News & World Report's* annual "Best Hospitals" issue. For more information, visit www.smh.com.

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