



# CCLS Connection

"Your partner in health care ... together we make a difference"

December 2012  
Volume 9, Issue 3

*Happy Holidays 2012*

*Sincerest wishes  
for hope,  
happiness  
and peace  
during this  
Holiday Season  
and throughout  
the coming year*

#### *Inside this issue:*

Happy Holidays 2012	1
Procalcitonin: A Marker for Sepsis	2
CCLS Employee Receives Regional and National Attention	3
New Online Test Catalog Launched	4
Save the Date	
Happy Holidays	5

#### **Mission Statement**

As part of CentraCARE  
Health System,  
We are a **TEAM** of  
dedicated health care  
professionals whose  
mission is to provide  
quality service,  
expert consultation and  
comprehensive medical  
laboratory information  
to Central Minnesota.

**CENTRA**CARE Laboratory Services

## Procalcitonin: A Marker for Sepsis

Submitted by: Jerome Schlabsz, Chemistry Technical Specialist

The New Year will bring new testing capabilities to CentraCare Laboratory Services. Procalcitonin (PCT) testing will be performed on our new bioMerieux Vidas 30 analyzer. This test will be performed on a Stat basis within our Chemistry department at St. Cloud Hospital and will be increasingly important for the early detection of bacterial sepsis.

PCT is secreted by different types of cells from numerous organs in response to proinflammatory stimulation, particularly bacterial stimulation. Depending on the clinical background, a PCT concentration greater than 0.1 ng/mL can indicate clinically relevant bacterial infection, requiring antibiotic treatment. At a PCT concentration > 0.5 ng/mL,

a patient should be considered at risk of developing severe sepsis or septic shock.

Sepsis is an excessive reaction of the immune system and coagulation system to an infection. The diagnosis and monitoring of infected patients are major problems for physicians. It has been proven that PCT levels increase rapidly, specifically in patients with a bacterial infection. For laboratory diagnosis, PCT is therefore an important marker enabling specific differentiation between a bacterial infection and other causes of inflammatory reactions. Moreover, the resorption of the septic infection is accompanied by a decrease in the PCT concentration which returns to normal with a half-life of 24 hours.

In certain situations such as with newborns, polytrauma, burns, major surgery, prolonged or severe cardiogenic shock, etc., PCT elevation may be independent of any infectious aggression, with a rapid return to normal values. Viral infections, allergies, autoimmune diseases and graft rejection do not lead to a significant increase in PCT. A localized bacterial infection can lead to a moderate increase in PCT levels.

The evaluation of PCT assay results must always be performed taking into consideration the patient's history and the results of any other tests performed.

More information will be provided after the first of the year regarding this exciting new testing.





## CCLS Employee Receives Regional and National Attention

For almost two years, CCLS has embraced one of its newest, hardworking, dedicated employees. He delivers specimens quickly and efficiently throughout the laboratory departments, never complains and is always polite. But, like most of us, he needs to stop and recharge his battery now and then. "He" is a 3-foot-tall autonomous mobile robot named Rocky.



During a Lean project analysis in the laboratory, specimen delivery was identified as a barrier to further improvements. Rocky, a product of Swisslog's RoboCourier product line, joined the laboratory team in February 2011 at St. Cloud Hospital in an effort to improve test turnaround time. Fully-automated track systems were cost prohibitive and not considered to be a good fit for the CCLS laboratory.

Rocky has increased productivity by allowing staff to focus on tasks at their workstations without having to step away to deliver or retrieve specimens. And he does so with charm, as Rocky communicates verbally through announcing his presence, asking about the weather or sports teams and generally interacting with other staff.

Throughout 2012, his

winning personality and skills garnered additional attention. This past summer, the Saint Cloud State University media program ran a story from their televised news network about Rocky and his role in laboratory efficiency. The story highlighted his features and included a video interview with Rocky.

In November, Rocky was featured in the Fall 2012 issue of *MedicalLab Management*, a national publication highlighting laboratory technologies and process improvements for clinical laboratory management. To view this article online, click [here](http://www.medlabmag.com) or visit the *MedicalLab Management* Web site at [www.medlabmag.com](http://www.medlabmag.com).

CCLS is one of only a few laboratories in the country with this type of technology and we are proud to have Rocky on our team.



## New Online Test Catalog Launched

In the September 2012 edition of CCLS Connection, we highlighted the CentraCare Laboratory Services site on CentraCare.com with its links and resources, including access to our online test catalog. In partnership with Mayo Medical Laboratories, CCLS has introduced further enhancements to the Web site by upgrading the online test catalog.



Selecting [Test Catalog](#) from the **Client Resources** menu will bring you directly to the improved site. Enhancements for the user include an easier to utilize search engine, all resource links on one page, and an overall cleaner look.

As always, we encourage you to visit CentraCare.com and explore the CCLS site under Specialty Centers to view our test catalog and additional

resources. If you have created a desktop shortcut to the test catalog, a redirect is in place to automatically bring you to the correct location. However, we recommend that you update any existing shortcuts when you access the new site.



# Save The Date

## Clinical Laboratory Collaborative 2013

### April 24-26, 2013



St. Cloud River's Edge Convention Center  
10 Fourth Avenue South  
St. Cloud, MN 56301  
(Formerly the St. Cloud Civic Center)

Visit [asclsmn.com](http://asclsmn.com) for more information or contact  
Cathy Bengtson, Meeting Co-Chair [Bengtson@albanytel.com](mailto:Bengtson@albanytel.com)

*AACC | AGT | ASCLS-MN | ASCP | CLMA | MIMA | MABB | AMT*



*The American Red Cross  
and Memorial Blood  
Center will be available  
to take donations during  
the conference.*

**CCLS CONNECTION**

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*In the spirit of the holiday season, CCLS would like to extend our appreciation for your business partnerships. The success of our relationships is crucial to the quality of care provided to the patients within our region. It has been a pleasure working with you to serve our communities.*



*From the staff of CentraCare Laboratory Services, we extend our very best wishes to each of you in the New Year.*