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NEWS RELEASE

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New instrument delivers quicker diagnoses, better care to Veterans

NASHVILLE, Tenn. – This month, VA Tennessee Valley Healthcare System (TVHS) doctors rolled out a new method to detect infectious agents in Veterans' blood.

The newly-acquired BioFire Blood Culture Identification (BCID) system allows TVHS doctors to detect harmful microorganisms in blood samples in just a few hours after blood cultures become positive. The previous method could take three days longer.

“By detecting infectious agents more quickly and earlier in the course of infection, the patient can be given the correct antibiotics more quickly,” said Dr. Claudio Mosse, TVHS Chief of Pathology and Lab Service. “The use of broad-spectrum antibiotics should decrease also, as more targeted therapy is utilized once the target is identified,” he said.

Positive blood cultures are automatically sent to the new BioFire BCID system and tested for the 24 most common infectious agents found in the blood of septic patients. Because a positive blood culture could still contain a less-common microorganism -- one the new system doesn't detect -- Dr. Mosse said all positive blood cultures are still processed through the older system as well.

Broad-spectrum antibiotics are associated with unintended side-effects. This new system will allow TVHS to reduce this risk through more targeted therapy. Targeted therapy is also likely to be more effective, meaning patients should be severely ill for less time.

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“By getting on the correct antibiotics more quickly, patients should be able to get healthy more quickly and have less exposure to drugs that they don’t need,” said Dr. Mosse.

All this means TVHS can deliver a quicker, better response to a Veteran suffering from a serious blood infection.

“The safety of our Veterans is our primary goal,” said Erica Johnson-Lockett, TVHS Patient Safety Manager. “Targeting specific organisms and ensuring Veterans receive the right antibiotics in a timely fashion is in line with the National Patient Safety Goal regarding medication safety.” She said. “The BioFire BCID system is a prime example of TVHS’s commitment to patient safety.”

The BioFire BCID system is in operation at TVHS’s Nashville facility.

TVHS is an integrated tertiary health care system comprised of two hospitals, the Alvin C. York Campus in Murfreesboro and the Nashville Campus, as well as more than a dozen community-based outpatient clinics located in Tennessee and Kentucky. TVHS provides ambulatory care, primary care, and secondary care in acute medicine and surgery, specialized tertiary care, transplant services, spinal cord injury outpatient care, and a full range of extended care and mental health services.

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