

# ***Babesia microti* Testing on Red Cell Products**



November 2, 2015

Effective immediately, Innovative Blood Resources (IBR), St. Luke's blood supplier, is implementing regional testing for antibodies for *Babesia microti* on all collected red cell products, utilizing an EIA antibody based test manufactured by Immunetics, Inc. under an Investigational New Drug (IND) protocol. This decision was based on Minnesota and Wisconsin being identified as high risk areas for Babesia, requests from their customers, and the availability of testing under the IND.

*Babesia microti* is a tick-borne parasite similar to malaria and is responsible for the highest percentage of transfusion-related infectious fatalities in the United States. While most cases are asymptomatic, severe complications and death may occur and are of greatest concern in neonates, the elderly, and immunocompromised individuals.

A sticker will be placed on each unit tested saying "This unit has tested negative for *Babesia microti* by an investigation serological test."

**If you have questions, please contact Jon Steinhauer, MD, Transfusion Services Medical Director at (218) 249-5208, or Paige Dibb, MLS (ASCP)<sup>CM</sup>, Transfusion Services Technical Specialist, St. Luke's Laboratory at (218) 249-6589.**

Reference: Memorial Blood Centers Service Update 15-30, 15-27. Judy Petersen. 2015.

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