



**TimeMed®**  
Labeling Systems, Inc.

**NEWS**

## **V-notch: Created for *EFFICIENCY*, Created for *SAVINGS!***

***Piedmont Hospital in Atlanta, GA Raises the Bar for Patient Safety & Laboratory Efficiency***

*October 2007 - Written in conjunction with Dawn D. Moore, Laboratory Director, Piedmont Hospital*

Piedmont Hospital has been serving the Atlanta community for more than 100 years. This 500-bed hospital was recently recognized as one of the most wired hospitals in the United States for the fourth consecutive year, and has received the HealthGrades Distinguished Hospital Award for Patient Safety for the last two years. Piedmont's focus on technology, quality service and patient safety extends throughout the hospital, including the laboratory where lab technicians process more than 2.4 million billable tests each year. Dawn Moore, Piedmont Hospital's Laboratory Director, with the assistance of TimeMed Labeling Systems, Inc., has worked hard to reduce medical errors in the lab and to ensure that patient safety remains a top priority.

### ***Here is Dawn's story. . .***

Ten years ago we had a decentralized phlebotomy department, which made it difficult to be consistent in the way we collected and labeled blood samples. Over time we have converted to a hybrid system which means the laboratory and nurses from different departments are responsible for drawing their own patients' blood. Regardless of how or who collected the blood, our biggest challenge was tube labeling and ensuring that nurses responsible for collecting blood samples were properly trained. Our lab would receive samples with crooked or upside-down labels, or with labels wrapped around the tube. Poor labeling would slow down turnaround time, and impact our technicians' productivity if labels needed to be reprinted. Because we have such a large staff and new people were frequently being added, we had a difficult time in providing consistent and effective labeling training.

Two years ago, we implemented a Beckman Coulter automated system in our lab, and proper labeling became even more critical. The label on the tube needed to be in a certain location on the tube, and if it was not in the right spot, the barcode on the label could not be read properly. When the automated system was deployed, teams from the lab and hematology trained all of the nursing units on how to label the tubes and emphasized the importance of proper tube labeling. We also conducted special education courses in our phlebotomy classes and started to send a simple paper reminder to departments that were not labeling correctly.

To make labeling easier, we worked with TimeMed to implement the v-notch label. The TimeMed v-notch label is a user-friendly labeling solution that has integrated seamlessly with our Soft Computer LIS and our automated systems. The label provided us a consistent way to train our nurses because of its simple application process of matching the notch on the tube with the notch on the label. The "notch-to-notch" message is something that is visible to the nurses and is a message that we can easily repeat to both current staff and new hires. [[Click for Product Info](#)]

While labeling improved, we ran into a challenge with the automated system on our hematology instrument. The laser reader on the instrument was aimed higher than the barcode location on the tube. Initial inquiries into getting the reader adjusted were met with resistance, yet we were able to work with Beckman Coulter to correct the problem without having to change the tubes and labels we were using.

We know from previous experience that change can be difficult. In addition to avoiding change, what was critical to us was being able to keep our labeling message consistent – "notch-to-notch." The idea of retraining 2,000 people on a new tube or labeling system was not an option for our growing hospital. The v-notch label has given our hospital the ability to train once, and because our labeling message is clear, we can deliver a simple and occasional reminder that has helped us to maintain proper labeling.

While we are a large workforce that is constantly changing and growing, we are seeing improvements in labeling. The efforts of our nurses are helping our lab technicians to be more efficient. As a result, we have dramatically increased the number of tests coming through our lab, and because we are relabeling fewer tubes, we have actually reduced our costs on labels. In fact, since implementing the v-notch label three years ago, we are spending 6% less on test tube labels despite the fact the number of tests coming through our lab has increased by more than 290,000, or 14%, from 2005 to 2007.

With the TimeMed V-Notch Label, we have been able to address a number of labeling issues, which has helped us to reduce our expenses, increase our efficiencies and maintain our focus on patient safety and quality patient care.

**Corporate Headquarters**  
144 Tower Drive  
Burr Ridge, IL 60527  
Phone: 800-323-4840 Fax: 800-548-5359  
[www.TimeMed.com](http://www.TimeMed.com)