September 30, 2011

Medical Director, Blood Transfusion Services DHA 1-9/IWK

Dear Medical Director,

The Nova Scotia Provincial Blood Coordinating Program (NSPBCP) is pleased to provide a new provincial guideline regarding the indications for washed red blood cells. The indications for washed red blood cells have been developed based on current evidence and then approved by Nova Scotia’s Transfusion Medicine Advisory Group (TMAG).

Washed red blood cells are recommended in the following situations:

- Neonates undergoing exchange/massive transfusion (BCPBO, 2007) (CBS Clinical Guide to Transfusion, p. 151)
- Intrauterine transfusions (Klein, Spahn, and Carson, p. 416)
- Patients with Anti-IgA or patients with IgA deficiency with a history of severe allergic reaction when RBCs from an IgA deficient donor are unavailable (CSA – Z902-10. p. 35) (CBS Clinical Guide to Transfusion, p. 151)
- Patients with a history of severe reactions to blood components (unresponsive to premedication) (CBS Clinical Guide to Transfusion, p. 90)

Total IgA deficiency is defined as an undetectable IgA level at a value of less than 0.05 mg/dl (0.0005 g/l). (Palmer et al., p. 1527) (Lilic and Sewell, p. 337)

Effective October 1, 2011, all requests for washed and/or IgA deficient components will be assessed by the Canadian Blood Services (CBS) Medical Director. Please ensure the following information is provided with each order:

- Special Request Order Form - Form #1000103465
- Reason for request, i.e. previous transfusion reactions (with type of reaction), patient is IgA deficient with the antibody
- Patient IgA testing results if patient is IgA deficient
- Ordering physicians’ contact information

If you require the Special Request Order Form, form #1000103465, please contact the CBS order desk to obtain a User Name and Password. The form may then be downloaded from their website www.blood.ca by following the links to “Hospitals” and “Hospital Customer Forms”.

Please incorporate this information into your operating procedures and communicate to the appropriate personnel within your facility. The *Guideline for Washed Blood Cells in Nova Scotia* is attached and will be posted on the NSPBCP website.

Sincerely,

Dr. David Anderson                                      Dr. Eiad Kahwash
Clinical Advisor, NSPBCP                       Medical Director, Canadian Blood Services

Cc.  Vice President Medicine, DHA 1-9/IWK
     Transfusion Medicine Advisory Group
     Laboratory Manager, DHA 1-9/IWK
     Transfusion Medicine Quality Specialists Working Group
     Katherine Fraser, Director Acute and Tertiary Care, DHW
     Marina Hamilton, Program Manager, NSPBCP
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