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We Take Pride in Safety: A Comprehensive Four-Part Laboratory Safety Program

Leonard K. Dunikoski, PhD and Donna M. Melee
Raritan Bay Medical Center, Perth Amboy NJ

The comprehensive laboratory safety program at our two-site medical center (Perth Amboy: 337 beds, Old Bridge: 119 beds) consists of four elements that easily could be replicated at other institutions:

1. Selecting equipment and supplies to maximize safety, including phlebotomy devices (such as the VanishPoint device from Retractable Technologies), patient identification devices (such as the BloodLoc device from Novatek Medical) and LIS-interfaced instrumentation featuring automation and closed-tube sampling (such as the Power Processor and LX20 Pro chemistry analyzer from Beckman Coulter).
2. Annual mandatory staff education programs emphasizing written policies for patient safety (patient identification, standard precautions, emergency evacuation, prevention of blood culture contamination, etc.) and staff safety (chemical hygiene plan, bloodborne pathogens, radiological safety, TB, fire/electrical/waste, etc.).
3. Formal, documented periodic (6-month) safety inspections by both laboratory and non-departmental personnel using written checklists that address both potential hazards as well as the staff's ability to verbalize knowledge.
4. Evaluating monthly safety documentation (accidents, incident reports, turnaround times, patient complaints, overtime, staff turnover, etc.) as well as staff input and feedback from monthly meetings.

Staff will accept such a "culture of safety" only when senior management shows that safety is a clear priority.