

## MSP Fee Schedule Changes due to New Lab Funding Agreement

As a result of the new Lab Funding Agreement, several significant changes were made to the Medical Services Plan (MSP) fee schedule. The changes have been in effect since October 1, 2010 and are summarized in the table below.

Test(s) ordered	Action	Rationale
Hemoglobin only Platelets only WBC only	Replaced by Hematology panel	Added information at no extra cost
CKMB	No longer payable: private pay only	Obsolete test; Troponin I recommended instead
Folate (serum & RBC)	No longer payable: private pay only	Deficiency now very uncommon
ESR & CRP ordered together	ESR no longer payable on same sample	ESR less specific than CRP
Amylase & Lipase ordered together	Amylase no longer payable on same sample	Amylase less specific than Lipase
Transferrin	No longer available: to be replaced by TIBC (for iron studies) or Albumin (for nutritional sufficiency)*	Transferrin is equivalent to TIBC (for iron studies) or Albumin (for nutritional sufficiency)

\* Scheduled for implementation November 2010.

*Dr. Jan Palaty, Head of Chemistry*

## Dr. Q's Question of the Month What is the D-Dimer test and when should it be ordered?

D-Dimer (DD) is the final product of fibrin degradation by plasmin. Its presence indicates that thrombosis has occurred *i.e.* activation of clotting, fibrin formation, fibrin stabilization of XIIIa and finally fibrin degradation by plasmin.

Elevated DD is seen in trauma, pre-eclampsia, DIC, infection, stroke, acute coronary syndromes, hemorrhages, malignancy, arterial and venous thromboembolism (VTE). Non-pathologic conditions include older age, smoking, pregnancy, and post-delivery or post-operative periods.

The sensitivity of the LifeLabs DD assay is 98% but since the test is not specific to VTE it is used mainly to rule out VTE when the pre-test probability is low or moderate. Patients with a high pre-test probability should receive immediate medical attention rather than awaiting test results.



Positive results are considered critical and communicated to the ordering physician immediately.

*Dr. Ekram Zayed, Head of Hematology*

## *my ehealth* a hit with patients

Earlier this year, we piloted a new service to patients – access to their own lab test information securely over the Internet through Excelleris' *my ehealth* HealthCare consumer portal.

After a short pilot in several of our patient service centres (PSCs), Excelleris expanded *my ehealth* to all PSCs in BC.

From the start, patient interest and uptake has exceeded all expectations, and the momentum continues with more than 400 new patients registering every day.

Today, more than 51,000 people – young and old – have registered for *my ehealth* and those with chronic conditions in particular, are enjoying the benefit of timely and secure access to their lab results.

Home page of *my ehealth* website

Every month, we mail more than 20,000 hard copies of their lab results to patients who ask for them. We're encouraging patients to opt for *my ehealth* – it's faster, more secure, and certainly more environmentally friendly than producing so many paper copies.

Excelleris is also working with public sector lab service providers to offer this service to patients attending their facilities as well.

*my ehealth* is a product of Excelleris, a company jointly owned by LifeLabs and BC Biomedical Laboratories. Excelleris has been providing BC physicians with electronic access to their patients' lab results for more than a decade. LifeLabs and BC Bio developed Excelleris to provide a secure electronic method of transmitting results to their physician clients. Now, through *my ehealth*, patients have the same access to their own results.

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