

# Barcode wristbands ensure the right match

What happens every time we purchase an item in a store? The barcode is scanned to match the item with the right name and the right price. But what makes this not-so-new technology exciting is that in May a pilot was completed on the Bone Marrow Transplant (BMT) unit at Vancouver General Hospital in the form of barcode patient wristbands—matching the right blood product to the right patient, one scan at a time.

The idea behind the **Positive Patient Identification** pilot was to decrease the potential for human error in lab compatibility tests and in blood transfusion. Both the manual and automated method were performed, one after the other.

## To draw blood for group and screen lab specimen processing

A nurse manually identifies the patient by asking for their name and birth date → Compares hospital number on the wristband to the test requisition → Draws blood from the patient → Uses a handheld computer to scan the patient's wristband, print a barcode label\*, and label the tubes at the bedside → Sends the blood sample to the lab for processing

## To perform a blood transfusion

A nurse manually identifies the patient by asking for their name and birth date → Compares the information on the wristband to that on the blood unit tag → Scans the patient's wristband → Scans the blood bag to ensure it is a match (correct blood type) → Begins the transfusion

During the pilot, patients completed questionnaires about their experience. What the BMT unit found was that patients favoured wearing the wristbands. Even better, nurses recognized that the technology could potentially decrease the workload of patient identification. Instead of two qualified caregivers carrying out the checking procedures plus documenting and signing multiple paper records, the technology allowed them to spend more time by the bedside and less time at the unit desk.

The results of the pilot will be used to recommend a regional positive patient identification strategy for the health authority. Do you want to know more about this test-driven technology? Contact **Diana Dy**, Project Manager, at [Diana.Dy@vch.ca](mailto:Diana.Dy@vch.ca).

\* Barcode information was stored in a system called *Blood Track® SafeTx* supplied by *Neoteric Technology Ltd.*

## // PRIVACY MATTERS //

Everyone at Vancouver Coastal Health wants to protect the privacy of patients and staff. The Information Privacy Office, together with the newly formed Information Privacy & Security Steering Committee, is developing and updating policies to guide staff when working with personal information. In the coming weeks several new or updated policies will be approved, communicated and published on the intranet, including:

- + Information privacy and confidentiality
- + Reporting theft or loss of information and information devices
- + Disposal of confidential information
- + Video surveillance
- + Use of technology
- + Use of email

This is the first of a comprehensive set of Information Management/Information Systems policies, standards and guidelines that will be implemented over time.

*If you have any privacy questions, concerns, or would like to know more about how these new policies may impact you, please contact the Information Privacy Office.*

*Privacy Hotline: 604-875-5568*

*Email: [privacy@vch.ca](mailto:privacy@vch.ca)*

*Policies on the intranet:*

*<http://www.vcha.ca/page610.htm>*



*Linking Care* is published bi-monthly by Information Management/Information Systems (IMIS) in partnership with Communications & Community Engagement and *Current*. If you have story ideas or feedback, please email [imis@vch.ca](mailto:imis@vch.ca) or call **Maile Conwi**, Editor, at 604-708-5310.