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For Immediate Release

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## News Release

### **“Health Region Contacts Patients about Potential Inaccuracy of Laboratory Test Results”**

Prairie North Health Region is in the process of informing patients about potential inaccuracy of laboratory test results in relation to blood coagulation testing.

The testing was done at Riverside Health Complex (RHC) in Turtleford between July 29 and November 3, 2009. The Region has identified 93 patients who had the testing performed. Each of the patients is being contacted and instructed to provide new blood samples that will be tested to ensure accurate, current results.

Dr. R. Bruce Murray, PNHR Vice-President of Medical Services, explained that the blood test in question is known as INR, International Normalized Ratio. This measurement helps physicians monitor patients taking the anticoagulant drug warfarin. The drug is used for patients who are at an elevated risk of developing blood clots due to the presence of heart irregularities, artificial heart valves, or inflammation of the veins.

“It has been found that the reliability of the INR tests performed at the Turtleford lab from the end of July to early November cannot be confirmed,” said Murray.

“Patient safety and quality assurance are paramount. We are therefore moving quickly to have the tests redone. We are also contacting each patient’s family physician to make them aware of the situation and provide timely, appropriate follow up with their patients.”

Prairie North Health Region recognizes the anxiety and concern this situation may cause patients. “We are hoping that by completing this recall as soon as possible, we can reduce this anxiety and concern,” Murray said. “Any patients who may have undergone INR testing at Riverside Health Complex in Turtleford between the end of July and the start of November, and who have not yet been contacted by us, are welcome to call the Complex at (306) 845-2195.”

When PNHR became aware in mid-October of the questionable consistency in INR quality assurance results from Turtleford, through normal external quality control testing, the Region immediately began investigations to review and attempt to verify the results of the quality control tests. An independent consulting coagulation laboratory was used and concluded in early November that the INR quality control test results could not be verified.

Outpatient INR testing has been halted in Turtleford until further notice and is being done at Battlefords Union Hospital in North Battleford.

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#### MEDIA:

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