

DATE:	2 February 2026
TO:	All Healthcare Professionals and Providers
FROM:	Alberta Precision Laboratories (APL)
RE:	Expansion of Small Volume Blood Collection Tubes Usage in Selected Hospitals

PLEASE POST OR DISTRIBUTE AS WIDELY AS APPROPRIATE

Key Message

- Starting November 26, 2025, small volume blood collection tubes will become the primary collection tube size for most of the routine laboratory testing in urban and regional hospital sites.

Facility	Proposed Go Live Date
Northern Lights Regional Health Centre	November 26, 2025
Grande Prairie Regional Hospital	
Red Deer Regional Hospital	January 14, 2026
Chinook Regional Hospital	December 10, 2025
Medicine Hat Regional Hospital	
University of Alberta Hospital	January 14, 2026
Rockyview General Hospital	February 4, 2026
South Health Campus	February 11, 2026
Peter Lougheed Centre	February 18, 2026
Foothills Medicine Centre	February 25, 2026

Background

- Iatrogenic anemia is prevalent in hospitalized patients and can be a contributing factor to negative patient outcomes.
- Recent published study demonstrated the use of small volume blood collection tubes reduces transfusions in intensive care¹.
- Standard blood collection tubes are often used for blood tests currently. The use of small volume tubes is possible for most routine laboratory lab tests
- The Don't Misuse My Blood (DMMB) Initiative aims to reduce blood usage in hospital settings and is supported by Acute Care Alberta. These are implemented in three phases:
 - Phase 1 involves evidence-based guidelines for appropriate ordering of blood products in critically ill patients. Full implementation was completed in July 2025.
 - Phase 2 involves switching blood collection tubes to small volume tubes in all adult Intensive Care Units (ICU) in Alberta. This was completed in July 2025 and has demonstrated a modest reduction in RBC usage as a result.
 - Phase 3 (current) is the expansion of small volume blood collection tube usage to entire hospitals in which the ICU was already converted.



Why this is important

- This initiative will be rolled out to urban and regional hospitals.
- Four small volume blood collection tubes are considered:
 - MINT LIHEP PST 3 mL
 - Lavender EDTA 2 mL (ICU) and 3 mL (all other inpatient units)
 - LIME BARRICOR LIHEP 3 mL
 - GREY 2 mL
- It is paramount to fully fill the tubes and follow proper collection practices to avoid test/add-on cancellations or delays due to insufficient volume.
- Standard volume tubes are still available in lesser quantities to be used for specific tests
- Collection instructions in APL Test Directory and Connect Care will indicate when standard volume tube is required (e.g. Type and Screen).

Action Required

- Ensure blood tubes are fully filled to minimize testing delay and cancellation.
- Ensure proper collection practices are followed.
- Do not make any CPSM cart changes. CPSM will work with areas for this transition.

Inquiries and feedback may be directed to

- Sara Pretzlaff, Senior Consultant, Critical Care Alberta, sara.pretzlaff@acutecarealberta.ca
- Dr. Albert Tsui, Pre-Analytic Section Chief, APL, albert.tsui@aplabs.ca

This bulletin has been reviewed and approved by

- Dr. Carolyn O'Hara, Chief Medical Laboratory Officer, APL

¹ Siegal DM et al., JAMA. 2023 Nov 21;330(19):1872-1881