

Foreword

Perhaps the most critical testing in blood donor eligibility is that of measuring the donor's hemoglobin level. Ensuring that the donor is not anemic protects the donor's health by the potential identification of underlying disease and prevention of ill effects of phlebotomy in donors with health problems.

An adequate hemoglobin level also affects the ability of the donated blood to create an effective product with the therapeutic value expected. And, of course, the recipient benefits from a transfusion intended to improve his or her health. Properly conducted, the determination of hemoglobin levels in blood donors also reduces unnecessary deferrals in an environment of shrinking donor pools, thus benefiting the wider community.

This *Guide* is intended to help facilities ensure optimal performance of this critical step in blood donor eligibility. It explains the key points that support the minimum standard required by both regulatory agencies and accrediting organizations. It also provides details on the different assays that may be used.

The Transfusion Medicine Section Coordinating Committee (TMSCC) oversaw the development of this *Guide*. The TMSCC appreciates the efforts of the authors in researching and presenting the information assembled herein. It is hoped that this core resource will assist facilities in advancing donor and patient safety.

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