



For Immediate Release

Contact: Fiona Phelan
Media Relations Manager
860.714.1076/ 860.712.8517
fphelan@stfranciscare.org

**SAINT FRANCIS CARE PARTNER
UNVEILS CUSTOMIZED CLINICAL LABORATORY SYSTEM**
\$5.5 million upgrade is unique in the nation

(Hartford, Conn. – August 5, 2014) – Collaborative Laboratory Services (CLS), a Saint Francis Care partner, today unveiled a \$5.5 million customized, fully automated clinical laboratory system that can process up to 1,200 patient samples an hour – the first of its kind in North America.

Located in a 4,200-square-foot space in the Hospital, the Automation Laboratory offers full-service chemistry, hematology, coagulation and immunochemistry testing for specimens obtained from patients at Saint Francis, Mount Sinai Rehabilitation Hospital, the *Connecticut Joint Replacement Institute (CJRI) at Saint Francis* and other Hospital clinics; 17 off-site Outreach Patient Service centers for phlebotomy services; and 50 post-acute care and assisted living facilities in Connecticut. The lab performs approximately 5 million tests annually.

“Custom lab automation is a huge step forward in taking care of our patients,” said Kathleen Luczyk, CLS Chief Operating Officer. “With this state-of-the-art facility we can greatly improve our test turnaround times, making diagnostic information available to our physicians and clients in a timelier manner, thereby improving the quality of patient care and patient safety.”

“The partnership between Saint Francis and Beckman Coulter is focused on providing the utmost quality to the patients of this community while helping provide an efficient, secure and safe work environment for the staff. We are honored to have the opportunity to work on this venture with Saint Francis,” said Joe Ross, Senior Marketing Manager, Beckman Coulter.

The installation caps off three years of planning to replace prior chemistry analyzers with the top-of-the-line equipment from international diagnostics and life sciences technology manufacturer Beckman Coulter. The lab at Saint Francis boasts the first fully automated lab in North America, consolidating all major disciplines (chemistry, immunochemistry, hematology and coagulation) onto one automated line. This provides the consolidation of patient specimen entry to one location to significantly reduce the risk for error.

The handling of patient specimens is now largely performed by robotics. Within the Hospital, specimens are delivered to the laboratory via a pneumatic tube system. Upon arrival, specimens are manually bar-coded, placed in specialized racks, and then transferred to the

Beckman Coulter Inlet module of the automation line – the sole time specimens experience human intervention. A robotic arm then transfers specimens from the 50-position rack on the Dynamic Inlet to individual specimen tube carriers at a single point of entry for the processing line. The specimen bar-code is scanned, then the robotics computer system queries the laboratory information computer system (LIS) to access information embedded within the bar-code, and routes individual specimens to the proper module of the automated line based on that information. If needed, specimens are centrifuged, decapped, aliquotted and then routed to specific analyzer(s).

From a single workstation, technologists monitor operations of multiple analyzers, as well as the automation line using Command Central, a unique combination of hardware and software. After testing is complete, results are uploaded to REMISOL Advance, the data management software, and when certain criteria are met, these results are automatically uploaded from Remisol to the LIS and *EpiCare*, the hospital electronic health record. The sophisticated informatics deployed by Saint Francis allow the hospital to automatically validate normal results to be posted to clinicians, representing up to 90+% of the work on the automated line. When the autovalidated criteria are not met, a technologist intervenes to evaluate the results and determine next steps.

After testing is complete, samples are automatically transported from the analyzer, recapped and delivered to two refrigerated stockyards located at the end of the automation line. Each unit has capacity to store up to >5,000 samples at between 2 degrees C and 8 degrees C. Specimens stored in the refrigerators are easily retrieved via the robotics without any human intervention if needed for further testing (add-ons, repeats).

Although the systems has been in operation for only two weeks, technologists and specimen processors have already embraced the new technology and have experienced the improved efficiencies in workflow that this system provides.

CLS is licensed and accredited by the College of American Pathologists (CAP), Food and Drug Administration (FDA), State of Connecticut, Certified OSHA Lead Testing Laboratory, Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services, CLIA Certification of Accreditation.

About Saint Francis Care

Saint Francis *Care* is an integrated healthcare delivery system established by Saint Francis Hospital and Medical Center, an anchor institution in north central Connecticut since 1897. Licensed for 617 beds and 65 bassinets, it is a major teaching hospital and the largest Catholic hospital in New England. Other major entities of Saint Francis *Care* include The Mount Sinai Rehabilitation Hospital, the Connecticut Joint Replacement Institute, the Hoffman Heart and Vascular Institute of Connecticut, the Saint Francis/Mount Sinai Regional Cancer Center, the Joyce D. and Andrew J. Mandell Center for Comprehensive Multiple Sclerosis Care and Neuroscience Research, and Saint Francis Health*Care* Partners. Johnson Memorial Medical Center, parent organization of Johnson Memorial Hospital, Evergreen Health Care Center, and Home and Community Health Services is also a Saint Francis *Care* Partner. Saint Francis *Care's* services are supported by a network of five major Access Centers and eight additional medical office centers sited throughout the region. For more information, visit www.stfranciscare.com