Canyon Vista Medical Center (CVMC) is a 100-bed hospital, with emergency services, a level III trauma unit, women and children’s services, level II nursery, and outpatient surgery center. The hospital services a small rural area and the blood bank provides 1,500 - 2,000 type and screens, with approximately 50 antibody identification workups annually.

Due to their remote location and the laboratory’s goal to offer quality results with limited staff, it was determined automated instruments would be implemented throughout the laboratory.

Decision Making: In 2012, while using manual gel for antibody screening, CVMC investigated all available blood bank analyzers on the market with particular emphasis on quality, ease of use, cost, and breadth of test menu (especially automated antibody ID panels). Based on site visits, CVMC chose to implement the Galileo Echo®.

Implementation And ‘Go Live’: In the beginning, not all staff embraced automation; in particular, the third shift was reluctant because of the low volume of blood bank samples received on their shift and because specimens are not received in batches. However, after the first busy day, the staff appreciated the Echo’s ease of use and fast turn-around-time.

Also, at implementation techs were concerned about reading and grading the solid phase results. They had used gel for years so were anxious about converting to another technology. Techs quickly overcame this when they realized a button at the bottom of a column or a well was the same negative result.

Looking Back: Five years after implementing the Galileo Echo, CVMC reflects on their decision:

- There have been fewer errors in the blood bank.
- Techs love the “load and go” feature of the linear racks; making the Echo an actual walk-away instrument.
- STAT samples are easily added to the instrument at any time because of the true continuous random access.
- CVMC has saved overtime costs because the Echo’s true positive sample identification allows samples to be passed to the next shift.
- The Echo has required maintenance only a few times with minimal downtime.
- The blood bank can be operated like the rest of the lab: by a generalist, not a tech assigned solely to blood bank.

Change is difficult especially when everyone is comfortable with the procedures and workflow; however, change is often times exactly what we need. Canyon Vista went from manual gel to automating most of their blood bank testing. This resulted in and went on to accomplishing standardization, less hands on time in the blood bank, and better workflow which was within their projected budget.

"The Echo is one of the most reliable instruments in our lab", per Jenny Acosta, the Chemistry Supervisor (Previous Third Shift Tech)