



## STATpack great boon to Enid, state

— A new system designed to identify bioterrorism materials already has paid dividends — and it didn't involve an attack on our country.

St. Mary's Regional Medical Center recently installed STATPack, which stands for Secure Telecommunications Application Terminal Package.

The system is a secure, Web-based network linking St. Mary's and, when the system is fully installed, nine other labs in various parts of the state with Oklahoma State Department of Health.

The system, purchased with funds from Health Resources and Services Administration, an arm of U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, was designed to help make clinical labs in Oklahoma better able to identify bioterrorism materials.

Shortly after it was installed at St. Mary's, a medical technician was doing tests on a patient's blood. The technician saw something unusual — malaria.

Using STATPack, St. Mary's officials were able to get help in determining what form of malaria it was and were able to prescribe the proper treatment. It turns out the patient had contracted the disease during a recent visit to Africa.

The system involves a camera attached to a microscope and a digital Web cam mounted on a sealed Plexiglas box connected to a computer, which are linked directly to the state Health Department. The system will allow a microbiologist at St. Mary's to send still photos or live video of suspicious samples to the state Health Department's experts.

Instead of having to send suspicious samples by courier to the state Health Department in a lengthy process, hospitals with STATPack can send the information in a matter of minutes. Responses, which previously took hours, now take minutes as well.

By being able to send pictures, STATPack also reduces the risk of spreading a potentially dangerous bioterror agent.

This is another example of equipment designed to combat a terrorist attack on our country being used to identify a lesser threat.

We're glad St. Mary's has received this technology and know it will be a great boon for our state.

Copyright © 1999-2006 cnhi, inc.