

Anticoagulation Clinic will make life easier for many

By Enterprise Staff

With the help of a local couple, Livingston HealthCare is making life a little more convenient for Park County residents who take the blood thinner warfarin.

The nonprofit health care group last week opened its Livingston HealthCare Anticoagulation Clinic in the organization's Park Clinic West Crawford facility.

With the opening of the new clinic, warfarin users now can give blood samples via simple finger sticks rather than full blood draws, LHC spokeswoman Sandi Marlowe said.

Patients also will receive nearly instant feedback from

the tests, allowing a pharmacist to immediately adjust a patient's medication as needed and send the information on to the patient's pharmacy and physician.

Warfarin, often known by the brand name Coumadin, helps prevent blood clots from forming. It is prescribed for a variety of health issues such as those associated with deep vein thrombosis or artificial heart valves. But patients using the drug must be monitored with frequent blood tests to ensure that other health factors, medications and even foods don't interfere with blood clotting occurring within a safe amount of time.

"Patients who use warfarin

have to manage their treatment very carefully — sometimes getting checked as frequently as twice per week," said Laine Loberg, LHC pharmacy manager, in a news release.

Before the clinic's opening, patients had to have blood drawn, wait for it to be sent to a lab and then had to wait a while longer while health care workers determined how to adjust medication and then communicate with the patient's pharmacy, Marlowe said.

The new clinic cuts what often was a daylong process down to a 15-minute procedure, she said.

Jack and Betsy Luther of Livingston donated \$7,800 to LHC to cover the cost of the finger stick equipment.

Betsy Luther takes warfarin and was disappointed when moving to this area from Colorado in 2007 that

LHC did not have the finger stick equipment that allowed for quick health updates, Marlowe said.

"Based on their generosity," Marlowe said of the Luthers, "we were able to purchase the

equipment that lets us do the finger stick and put together this anticoagulation clinic. And now the whole community can benefit."

LHC estimates the clinic will help 400 to 500 Park Coun-

ty residents, Marlowe said.

Appointments at the clinic are available Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays from 1 p.m. to 5 p.m. To make an appointment, call 222-9970.

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