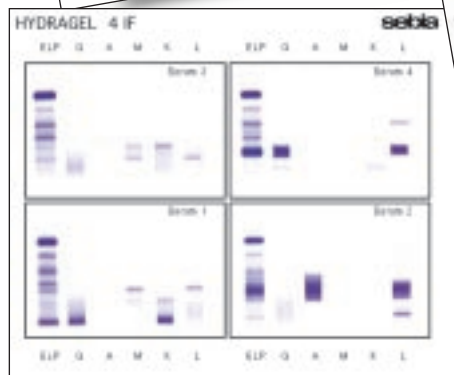
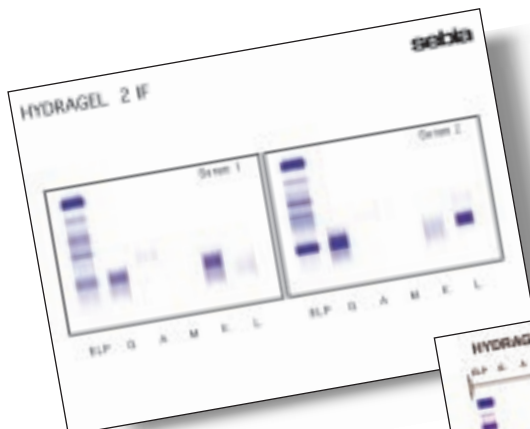


Centrex Clinical Laboratories, Inc., Utica, New York

**Centrex turns to Sebia solution to fight disturbing epidemic: Staffing shortages**



Resolution is what the medical laboratory is all about - determining causes and finding cures for complex conditions. Yet many high volume labs in today's cost-sensitive healthcare environment are struggling to resolve a growing problem: the limited supply of personnel.

Centrex Clinical Laboratories in Utica, N.Y., was facing that very challenge. As a hospital-based reference lab serving three

hospitals and several outpatient clinics, Centrex is knee-deep in work...much of it on a 'stat' basis. But while the volumes keep spiraling higher, the lab staff remains lean.

Tim Towne, Chemistry/Special Chemistry Supervisor, points to two issues that challenge the heavy workload. "In our industry, qualified people are very hard to find," he notes. "On the other hand, like other organizations, we're under enormous pressure to reign-in our operating costs - so it would be difficult for us to justify hiring huge teams of personnel even if they were available."

Realizing that the lab would have to handle the ever-increasing amount of work without adding staff, Towne and his colleagues determined that a new electrophoresis system was needed to further automate this routine testing, thus freeing up personnel time for other tasks. While Centrex already had an electrophoresis system in place, the instrument required significant hands-on time and was not 'walkaway' enough to meet the lab's needs.

**"The quality of Sebia's gels is dramatic. We feel extremely confident about their accuracy."**

Dr. C. Brett Hon, Pathologist

"What we liked about Sebia's HYDRASYS was that it took over most of the manual tasks we were doing on the previous system - allowing us to focus on other kinds of testing while running electrophoresis," Towne explains. The HYDRASYS expedites the multiple steps involved in electrophoresis and immunofixation, automatically handling everything from sample application to migration to incubation to staining, destaining and drying.

Using the Sebia 4 IF and 9 IF gels, Centrex can run smaller or larger batches of tests as the workload changes day to day. Because the lab does not run electrophoresis on a daily basis, the 9 IF gel has been particularly helpful in getting through accumulated volumes more quickly.

By drastically cutting the time they used to spend on electrophoresis, Centrex techs can now tackle other testing that previously was outsourced. This has significantly reduced expenditures and generated additional revenues for Centrex.

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# Customer Focus



"Best of all, we can comfortably handle all of this without new personnel," Towne adds. Med Tech Cheryl Conkling a 30-year industry veteran, is grateful for the timesavings; she runs four other instruments along with the HYDRASYS. "I consider myself lucky to be able to get in and out of electrophoresis as fast as I can," she says. "The HYDRASYS is extremely easy to use - I just turn it on and go. It seems to be about two to three times faster than our old system."

Depending on the volume for any given day, Centrex can typically turnaround routine, non-stat electrophoresis in roughly 72 hours. Prior to using the HYDRASYS, turnaround time was as much as four or five days.

While speed is essential in healthcare, quality is paramount...and Sebia's instrument hits high marks with the Centrex team in this area. According to Dr. C. Brett Hon, Pathologist, the quality of Sebia's gels is "dramatic. We feel extremely confident about their accuracy," he explains. "The previous gels we were using had a tendency to warp and bend, which meant we had to repeat a lot of examinations. Moving to Sebia has eliminated that problem. And, we can run anywhere from nine to 30 tests on the Sebia gel, depending on gel size."

Towne reports that neither the pathologists nor lab staff expressed any qualms about moving to fully automated electrophoresis. "It helped that we had the opportunity to evaluate the HYDRASYS in-house for a couple of weeks before we finalized our decision. All of our techs had the opportunity to use it, and the response was a resounding 'yes'," he says. Conkling adds that the clarity of results was a major selling point. "The points are very definite - so much better than what we had before," she says.

*"Sebia's engineers are very responsive. We've never experienced any downtime with this system."*

Tim Towne, Chemistry/Special Chemistry Supervisor

According to Towne, installation was painless and completed in about a month, including time for training and validation. "I would consider that a very quick timeframe," he notes. "Sebia provided terrific on-site support throughout implementation. And in the time we've been up and running, we've had a couple of minor issues that have been easily resolved through the 800 number. Sebia's engineers are very responsive. We've never experienced any downtime with this system."

Overall, would the Centrex team recommend the HYDRASYS to industry peers? Consider Dr. Hon's assessment: "If you're looking for a system that can reduce tech time, provide high resolution and outstanding gel quality, get the HYDRASYS. This is a very high quality product."

## About Centrex Clinical Laboratories, Inc.

Established in 1969, Centrex Clinical Laboratories provides quality laboratory services to a wide variety of clients ranging from physicians, hospitals, clinics and nursing homes to veterinarians and industry. As the premier regional laboratory in upstate New York, Centrex is nationally recognized as the gold standard model for community-based laboratory systems with excellence in quality process, technical expertise and information systems. In 1999, Centrex performed approximately three million billable tests in its five laboratories and thirty patient service centers throughout the region.

