

Blood test error causes death

FALLS CHURCH, Va. — A woman who swapped beds with another patient in their hospital room so she could be nearer the window died after receiving the wrong type of blood during surgery.

In preparation for the surgery last month, a technician at Inova Fairfax Hospital mistakenly took a blood sample from the woman's roommate, hospital officials said.

Hospital spokeswoman Beth Visioli said yesterday that the woman had switched beds but that the death was the result of human error by a hospital employee.

The technician did not follow the hospital's established procedures for identifying patients, which requires examining each patient's wristband and having the patient state his or her name.

The hospital now requires a second person to accompany a technician when blood is drawn as a safeguard against misidentification.