

September 18, 2006

Dear «title» «lastname»:

*Re: Establishment of National Standards for Laboratories/Immunohistochemistry Testing*

The Canadian Association of Pathologists, representing over 940 pathologists, wishes to develop a national external quality assurance policy in laboratory medicine and immunochemistry and would welcome the opportunity of working collectively with you on these national standards.

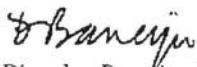
At the moment there are different tests, systems and applications used across the country with little or no consensus on quality assurance, inconsistent protocols and variable criteria for interpretation. This is a very high risk area and by not having national standards on quality assurance, we will be looking at high costs down the road. We strongly feel that the government needs to be made aware of the importance of having national quality assurance of laboratories, laboratory tests and the interpretation of the results.

Our plan is to form a coalition working group to develop national standards for laboratories, particularly for immunohistochemistry testing. This group consisting of several stakeholders (listed below) would then prepare a business plan and present this to the government as a group. We believe by working together our voice will be heard and acted upon by government.

An additional item for discussion is the timely introduction of biomarker tests in order to facilitate patient selection for targeted therapies across the nation, with a clear national process for evidence-based decision making and a consistent mechanism of credentialing and funding laboratories to perform these medically necessary tests. Failure to address this will lead to inconsistent access to targeted therapies and inappropriate therapy or denial of therapy triggered by false-positive or false-negative tests, respectively.

I will follow this letter with a phone call to discuss the possibility of collaboration. In the meantime, please feel free to contact me at: dbanerje@bccancer.bc.ca with any questions and comments. The Canadian Association of Pathologists looks forward to working with you on this important and much needed policy.

Sincerely yours,



Diponkar Banerjee, MBChB, FRCPC, PhD  
President

*"The Canadian Association of Pathologists is a voluntary professional organization of laboratory physicians and scientists. The CAP's mission is to provide national leadership in Pathology and Laboratory Medicine through the promotion of excellence in practice, education, and research and through the fostering of integrity and high standards of ethical behaviour. The CAP will also promote collegiality and advocate for the professional interests of laboratory physicians".*

Cc:

Dr. Simon Sutcliffe, Canadian Strategy for Cancer Control (CSCC)  
Dr. Brent Schacter, Canadian Association of Provincial Cancer Agencies (CAPCA)  
Dr. Barbara Whyllie, Canadian Cancer Society (CCS) and National Cancer Institutes of Canada (NCIC)  
Ms. Lori Messer, Canadian Cancer Society (CCS)  
Dr. Elizabeth Eisenhauer, National Cancer Institute of Canada (NCIC)  
Dr. William Evans, Canadian Association of Medical Oncologists (CAMO)  
Dr. Iom Pickels, Canadian Association of Radiation Oncologists (CARO)  
Ms. Georgia Hearn, Canadian Coalition for Quality in Laboratory Medicine (CCQLM)