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From: John Abbott
To: Chaplin, Carolyn; Hennessey, Moira; Hynes, Darrell
Date: 7/25/2005 3:37:01 PM
Subject: Fwd: Laboratory Status

An update as provided by George Tilley.

Darrell - if you are speaking with the Minister would you let him know the status. Thanks.

John G. Abbott
Deputy Minister of Health & Community Services
(709) 729-3125

>>> "George Tilley" <George.Tilley@hccsj.nl.ca> 7/25/2005 11:44:02 AM >>>
John,

Had a meeting Sunday morning with those involved, including an oncologist and a surgeon. We are clearly not at a point yet where we can be confident that we have a problem and if so, the extent of it. The physicians are feeling a little more comfortable based on the recent information provided, but more is needed to get to the bottom of this.

The Lab officials are currently:

- making contact with the manufacturer of the new system (Vantana) to see what information/research they have on hand about the old approach/technology, experiences elsewhere on conversion to the new system, sensitivity rates, etc. We also want to ensure that our new system is working properly so today we are sending old and new specimens to an outside centre which has the new technology to compare results.
- getting information from more centres in the country about their experiences. For example, in New Brunswick we learned that they don't keep a log of their overall/annual positivity rates, and that they have also had conversions from negative to positive, but had not kept an eye to the frequency of these conversions. Question is whether this is something that is isolated to us or not?
- I learned that for the specimens that we recently retested and reported as converting to positive, we included in that sample those that originally reported as a weak positive. It would be expected that this would happen. What I am interested in are those that went from negative to positive. From the oncologist perspective, they don't distinguish between positive and weak positive.
- we have a lot of people trying to get more information. We will have to wait now for the results of the tests on the specimens that we will be sending out of Province, info from the new manufacturer and the experiences from elsewhere. It will take at least until the end of this week to get that done if not the week after. We are also awaiting the return of the results of the specimens from elsewhere in this Province, where we did the reporting but didn't have the interpretation results, in light of that being done by their local pathologists.

I'll keep you posted as soon as we get more information.

George

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