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Ms. B. Paulse
Newfoundland Cancer Treatment and Research Foundation
Dr. H. Bliss Murphy Cancer Centre
300 Prince Philip Drive
St. John's, NF

Dear Ms. Paulse:

I am writing this letter in regard to requests from your centre for pathology consultations. We receive requests for two types of consults and I will address each type individually.

Routine Pathology Consultations

On a regular basis, we receive these consult requests from physicians at the centre who are seeing a patient who has had previous pathology work performed. Our problem with current requests for consultation on the patient is that the requesting physician does not include where in the province this patient has had prior pathology work performed. All other information on the request is fine, i.e. patient's name, MCP #, history, etc., is all provided.

As you can see, even though it would be a simple procedure for the requesting physician to include where the patient had their pathology work performed, when it is not provided my staff spend a great deal of time trying to determine where to request the pathology slides and blocks in order that our pathologists can review them for your physicians.

In future, would you please inform your staff that they must include where the patient had their surgery and pathology work performed. If the information is not provided, then I have instructed my staff to simply return the consultation request form to the centre as not providing the proper information.

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Consultation Requests for Estrogen and Progesterone Receptors / HER-2/NEU

As you are probably aware, since the Spring of this year, ER-PR's are now performed by immunohistochemical assay in pathology and not by biochemical assay in chemistry. This decision has greatly improved this portion of the laboratory service to the province. However, it has greatly increased our workload in pathology.

We receive requests from across the province for this service including requests from your centre on patients that have been referred to physicians at the Cancer Clinic. Currently if one of your physicians who is attending a referred patient requests or determines that ER-PR needs to be performed, they simply complete a consultation record form which includes the patient's name, MCP number, etc.

Because the pathology laboratory here at the Health Sciences Centre is the site that performs ER-PR's for the province, all the requests from the Cancer Clinic are coming directly to our laboratory even though the majority of the patients being seen by your physicians have been referred from other hospitals across the province. As you can see this means that my staff are spending a great deal of time in ascertaining:

- A) where the patient originated from
- B) did they already have ER-PR performed

↗ HER2/NEU

The only consultation forms for ER-PR's that we need to see from your centre are for those patients that originated from within The General Hospital. In those cases we will perform the ER-PR's and one of our pathologists will provide the interpretation.

For all other patients that have been referred to your centre from across the province who require ER-PR's, the consultation request by your physicians should be completed and sent to the pathology lab at the site where the patient had surgery. It will then be up to the pathologist at that site to request our laboratory to perform ER-PR's if they haven't already been performed. The originating site will then send to us the pathology blocks on the patient and we will fulfil the request and send the slides to the requesting pathologist so that they can interpret the results for your physicians.

Your cooperation in the above matters will be greatly appreciated.

Sincerely yours,


Terry Gulliver
Pathology Manager