

Briefing Note

**Treasury Board Decision Affecting Pathologists
and NLMA Request for Meeting**

- Recently, Treasury Board consider a request to provide a bonus for the Province's pathologists in the range of \$50K-\$60K (similar to one provide oncologists); as part of the submission, the issue of workloads was identified with a suggestion that a study be done as part of any decision to award a bonus to the pathologists.
- The Treasury Board decision was to complete a workload study along with compensation issues prior to any consideration being given to awarding a bonus as requested by the pathologists.
- On May 16th, 2006, the NLMA and the head of pathologists group (Dr. N. Denic) wrote Ministers Sullivan and Osborne requesting a meeting to discuss government's decision. They raise a concern about the potential impact that the decision to do a workload study before payment of bonuses may have on retention of pathologists and its related impact on the delivery of health care services e.g. cancer care in the province. Pathology services are essential to the diagnosis of disease and potential course(s) of treatment.
- Knowing of the pathologist's negative reaction to government's decision, one option raised in discussion with the NLMA was to initiate the workload study and request that Treasury Board make the appropriate bonus payments retroactive to an earlier date (e.g. April 1, 2006).
- The Department of Health and Community Services, in conjunction with Eastern Health, has identified an external consultant (Dr. Maung) to provide advice on workload matters pertaining to pathology. There has been no response from the NLMA on whether or not this person is acceptable.
- Today, the Department learned that the NLMA is not keen on doing the study as suggested; instead; it would prefer to reach agreement on payment of a bonus and initiate a longer term study, if both parties want it, to address not only workload issues but quality of care and other matters pertaining to pathology in the province. The NLMA proposal would be expected to take longer to complete than a shorter-term study on workload and compensation issues.
- At this juncture, resolution may only be achieved by a meeting of the representatives of the pathologists with Ministers.