

Feb 11, 2008

## **Miramichi Regional Health Authority releases results of pathology review and will conduct an additional external review of pathology specimens**

Results from an audit of pathological reports of a former pathologist indicate a further retrospective review is required. A pathologist is a doctor who specializes in diagnosing diseases by examining tissue, blood, and body fluids using sophisticated laboratory techniques. The audit was conducted by an independent pathologist in January 2008 and included 227 cases of prostate and breast cancer biopsies from 2004-05. The results of this audit indicated that 18 percent of the cases reviewed had incomplete results and three percent of the cases were misdiagnosed.

“Based on these findings, a retrospective review of pathological reports of the former pathologist will be conducted from February 2007 going back to 1995,” says Gary Foley, president and CEO of the Miramichi Regional Health Authority. He says external and independent specialists will conduct the review that will include approximately 15,000 cases. All patients who have had their pathological tests such as tissue biopsies analyzed by this pathologist will be contacted by either their family doctor or referring surgeon. If neither are in the region patients are requested to call (506)623-3300 and a physician will get back to them. This process may take some time. There are no concerns for tests performed after February 2007.

“When serious concerns first arose regarding diagnostic reporting issues from a former pathologist in January 2007, the Miramichi Regional Health Authority took immediate steps by contacting the College of Surgeons and Physicians. The Health Authority simultaneously began the process of arranging for an external review of the pathology department at the Miramichi Regional Hospital. This review was complete in August 2007 and involved 414 cases. Based on the findings of this review, it was determined that a further more in depth audit was required to examine the pathological reporting of a former pathologist. No concerns were raised regarding the work of the organization’s current pathologist.

“We were motivated to ensure that quality patient care, diagnostic testing and treatment was and is provided to the public,” says Foley. He says patient safety is and remains to be a top priority for the Miramichi Regional Health Authority.

Foley stresses the organization and its medical staff has full confidence in its current laboratory services that includes the staff and pathologist who work there.

Miramichi Regional Health Authority is dedicated to improving the quality of its service. "As a result of this review, we have enhanced quality improvement processes to ensure the integrity of our specimen analysis."

Patients affected can contact their family doctor, go to [www.rha7.ca](http://www.rha7.ca) (Click on Pathology Review) or call the toll free patient information line at 1-866-577-5901. This line will be in service starting Tuesday, February 12, 2008

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