

May 2, 2008

Miramichi Regional Health Authority provides update #2 regarding pathology review

The retrospective review of pathology reports of a former pathologist is continuing with Gamma-Dynacare Medical Laboratories beginning to re-examine approximately 24,000 patient cases. This includes pathology reports from 1995 to 2006. An independent pathologist is also involved in the review of cases from 2006 and 2007. The review only applies for procedures or tests where tissue was removed. This is also known as a biopsy. Blood work and x-rays are not affected. The Department of Health has contracted the Canadian medical laboratory Gamma-Dynacare Medical Laboratories in Ottawa, Ontario to conduct the retrospective review.

“The most recent cases are being re-examined first,” says Gary Foley, president and CEO. He says the re-examined final reports have begun to be received and are being communicated back to the patient’s doctor whom is responsible to notify their patient of the results.

This work is being conducted as quickly as possible so that patients whose tissue samples were reviewed by the former pathologist can have confidence in the accuracy of their diagnoses. The work is expected to be completed by the end of September, at a projected cost of about \$2 million, which will be paid by the Department of Health.

The slides of the 24,000 cases have been professionally packed and logged. The first shipment of 23 boxes was sent on April 6, 2008 and is currently being reviewed. The remainder of the slides will be shipped once Gamma-Dynacare is ready to receive them.

Miramichi doctors have received their complete patient lists from 1995 to February 2007 patients. All patients who have had their pathology tests such as tissue biopsies analyzed by this pathologist will be contacted by either their family doctor or referring surgeon. If neither is in the area, they are requested to call (506)623-3300 and a doctor will get back to them.

Patients affected can also contact their family doctor, go to www.rha7.ca (Click on Pathology Review).

“Patient safety is a top priority for the Miramichi Regional Health Authority and we are working as quickly as possible to complete this retrospective review,” says Foley. He says two independent reviews have indicated that no concerns were raised regarding the work of the hospital’s current pathologist. “We are confident in the current laboratory services and the staff and pathologists who work there.” He says the health authority supports the Department of Health in their initiatives

to hold a public inquiry. "Miramichi Regional Health Authority is dedicated to improving the system."

The Miramichi Regional Health Authority is completing a retrospective review of all pathological reports of a former pathologist based on findings from an independent review. 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.

For more information contact: Sonya Green-Haché, communications coordinator at 506-623-3003