



Path2Quality



The Honourable Deborah Matthews
Minister of Health and Long-Term Care
Office of the Minister
10th Floor, Hepburn Block
80 Grosvenor Street
Toronto, ON M7A 2C4

August 6, 2010

Dear Minister,

We have had an opportunity to review the recently-released Ministry report on surgical and pathology issues in Windsor and wish to congratulate you for taking immediate and appropriate action on this important matter. Clearly, the investigating team undertook a thorough and thoughtful review. The report and its recommendations are very comprehensive.

Path2Quality represents a collaboration between the OMA Section on Laboratory Medicine and the Ontario Association of Pathologists. As the consolidated voice of Pathologists and other Laboratory Physicians in Ontario, we look forward to working with the Ministry and the facilitator to help implement these important recommendations. We are particularly encouraged by the recommendations in the report for “Quality and Safety in Pathology across Ontario”, specifically:

- Recommendation 17 which calls for the development and implementation of a provincial quality assurance system for pathology that includes standards and guidelines; and
- Recommendation 18 which supports our group, Path2Quality, taking the lead on this initiative.

You may be pleased to know that, following earlier correspondence with you this March, Path2Quality has made significant progress with its initiative to develop provincial standards and guidelines that are aligned with these recommendations.

“*Standards2Quality*” is a project, funded by Cancer Care Ontario and developed by Path2Quality, which aims to develop a comprehensive set of best practices guidelines for internal quality assurance measures related to pathology cancer diagnosis, for use at the individual hospital level. Target date for completion of this project is Spring 2011.

The intent of the *Standards2Quality* project is to provide guidance to individuals, groups and institutions on the processes necessary for ensuring the highest quality cancer diagnosis by Pathologists, as well as guidance with respect to the resources and infrastructure required to support related quality programs. Although initially focusing on cancer diagnosis, it is expected that the results of the *Standards2Quality* project eventually will be applicable to all areas of pathology and potentially other areas of interpretive laboratory medicine. It is anticipated that this blueprint could form the basis of a provincial program.

Utilizing the expertise of the Path2Quality group and provincial partners, best practices guidelines will be developed through a review of existing national and international guidelines, standards and evidence. Path2Quality will be seeking ongoing input from its joint membership (the OMA Section on Laboratory Medicine and the Ontario Association of Pathologists) as well as from related professional and regulatory groups to ensure that the proposed plan is appropriate for the Ontario practice environment. These are the same national and provincial stakeholders / partners who attended our symposium on this issue in late November (see Executive Summary in Appendix A below). It is their commitment to working with us that, in effect, was the launching point for this project.

We believe this project with provincial perspective will most certainly complement the work of the facilitator as he moves to implement the recommendations of the Windsor report.

Pathologists and other Laboratory Physicians have always been leaders in applying quality management systems to their professional work. Path2Quality aims to strengthen this capacity through projects such as *Standards2Quality* which address an integral part of the framework for improved laboratory medicine quality assurance systems in the Province. Path2Quality will do this by working with key stakeholders, such as the Ministry, to ensure a safer and more reliable system for cancer diagnosis and patient-care in Ontario.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

For Path2Quality,



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Cc: Saad Rafi, Deputy Minister of Health

November 27, 2009 Path2Quality Symposium

Clarifying Roles, Responsibilities and Critical Elements in Quality Management Systems as Applied to the Professional Work of Ontario's Laboratory Physicians

Executive Summary

Path2Quality is a collaborative initiative of the Ontario Medical Association (OMA) Section on Laboratory Medicine and the Ontario Association of Pathologists. Path2Quality advocates for Ontario's laboratory physicians, particularly in matters related to quality management as it affects laboratory physicians' professional work.

On November 27, 2009, Path2Quality, in conjunction with the Health Policy Department of the OMA, hosted a symposium of key stakeholders involved or interested in quality assurance as it applies to the professional work of Ontario's laboratory physicians. The purpose of the Symposium was essentially three-fold: i) to help clarify for front-line practitioners their responsibilities to these organizations; ii) to provide an opportunity for the profession, via Path2Quality, to present to those organizations front-line practitioners' issues, concerns and needs related to quality assurance; and iii) to refine the role of Path2Quality in this arena moving forward.

The organizations participating in this Symposium included: the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada (RCPSC); the Canadian Medical Protective Association (CMPA); the Canadian Association of Pathologists (CAP); the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario (CPSO); Cancer Care Ontario (CCO); the Quality Management Program for Laboratory Services (QMP-LS) and the Institute for Quality Management in Healthcare (IQMH); the Ontario Forensic Pathology Service (OFPS); the Ontario Association of Medical Laboratories (OAML); and the Ontario Medical Association (OMA). Additionally, all five Ontario University Chairs of Pathology and Laboratory Medicine along with some front-line laboratory physicians were represented.

The symposium enabled Path2Quality and the participating organizations to articulate their roles, responsibilities and commitment to assuring quality in the professional work of laboratory physicians. The discussions highlighted overlaps in responsibilities that sometimes cause confusion for the profession, as well as opportunities for collaboration among the various stakeholders.

Most importantly, the process revealed the need for a comprehensive framework for quality management that embraces all of the stakeholders and promotes synergy in their collective efforts. (e.g., guidelines development, continued professional development, accreditation, etc.).

Specifically, there is interest in the development of practice guidelines, as well as an interest in advocacy for improved resources in order that organizations and practitioners are able to subscribe to such guidelines.

It was suggested that Path2Quality take the lead in developing this framework. In doing so, Path2Quality could help: develop the overall program framework; define the role organizations might play in designing the program and implementing it; as well, as develop associated timelines for the plan.

Note: The complete symposium synopsis is available upon request.