



## Ontario Association of Pathologists

Official Statement related to:

### **Report of the Investigators of Surgical and Pathology Issues at Three Essex County Hospitals: Hotel-Dieu Grace Hospital, Leamington District Memorial Hospital and Windsor Regional Hospital**

The Windsor report looking into surgery and pathology issues at the three Essex County hospitals was released by the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care last week. We commend The Honourable Deb Matthews, Minister of Health and Long-Term Care and the investigating team for addressing the issues expeditiously. The review has been thorough and the recommendations are comprehensive. The appointment of the facilitator is a testimony to the government's commitment for quality patient care and safety in our province.

The unfortunate cases of medically unnecessary mastectomies, as occurred in Windsor, must be avoided in the future. As a not-for-profit medical society that represents the interests of patients, the public and pathologists, the Ontario Association of Pathologists (OAP) finds these events deeply regrettable, and we extend our sympathies to those affected.

Pathologists in Ontario are committed to quality patient care and safety. When it comes to cancer diagnosis, pathology is often seen as providing the gold standard for further treatment, in that it indicates the presence or absence of cancer and its specific type and severity.

The OAP has been working with various partners, including the Ontario Medical Association (OMA) Section on Laboratory Medicine and Cancer Care Ontario, to develop quality assurance standards in pathology across the province. With assistance of Cancer Care Ontario, the "Standards2Quality" project has started. The objective is to develop best practice guidelines for quality assurance in cancer pathology for use in all hospitals and laboratories. The target date for completion of this project is the spring of 2011.

The OAP also believes that human resource and infrastructure support is integral to safe pathology practice. Pathology is experiencing significant challenges in medical and technologist human resources, and in laboratory infrastructure and technology, a situation that the Association has highlighted to the government for over a decade. These challenges must be addressed expeditiously in order to ensure that patients in every area of Ontario have access to timely, accurate and safe pathology services.

The Board of Directors of the Ontario Association of Pathologists

August 10, 2010