

March 12, 1997

February 27, 1997
Thursday 3:45 P.M.

Mr. Terry Gulliver
Manager, Anatomic Pathology
The General Hospital
St. John's, NF A1B 3V6

Dear Mr. Gulliver:

The Estrogen and Progesterone (ER/PR) kit that we have tried and which offered us very good and reliable results has been totally consumed by late last week (Thursday, February 20, 1997). You knew this and you were trying to use a new detection system in combination with an old primary antibody that the laboratory had for sometime. This combination did not work. I called you on Monday morning at the Janeway Hospital Site and told you that we were having an emergency situation. Any trial of a new technique need to be done in parallel with a well established one before a switch could be safely made. I thought I conveyed to you this message clearly and asked you to replace the ER/PR kit as soon as possible. This was an emergency situation because, at that time, we had two cases referred from Corner Brook and one in-house case (from 1996) which were waiting for this test to be reliably performed. As of now, the kit has not arrived and I was told that you are out of town. Ordering such a kit in a timely fashion was vital and a follow up on the order was even more crucial.

Mr. Gulliver, I do not think you fully appreciate the delicacy of this test, its clinical consequences and the overall emotional charge in the public regarding this very sensitive procedure. I am also uncertain whether our service is being run as smoothly as it should. The medico-legal implications of delaying this test are huge and I want to clearly document my concerns at this time. You willingly have put me in a situation where I have to explain to other physicians why our results are being delayed. I do not want to be responsible for this. I am also having very difficult time communicating with you basically because you are either out of town, on another site or extremely busy within this site. I would have expected you to approach this issue with more precision since Monday morning, as you had told me and even more, not to have allowed the first kit to be consumed without obtaining a replacement in a timely manner.

Yours,

Mahmoud A. Khalifa, MD, PhD, FRCPC
ASSISTANT PROFESSOR OF PATHOLOGY
SITE CHIEF, PATHOLOGY

cc: Dr. D. Haegert and Mr. V. Whelan