

17 November 2004

Dr. R. Williams
VP Medical Services
Health Care Corporation of St. John's
Health Sciences Centre

Dear Dr. Williams,

Re: Request for funding to provide the salaries of two Pathologists' Assistants for the Anatomic Pathology, Division of the Laboratory Medicine Program

I am writing to request the provision in the next Budget template application of **\$130,000 per annum to supply the salaries, including benefits, of two Pathologists' Assistants** in the Division of Anatomic Pathology of the Laboratory Medicine Program. Pathologist Assistants now play a major role in the delivery of Surgical Pathology services within the nation's main teaching centres. They interact with pathologists in the same manner that physicians' assistants carry out their duties under the direction of physicians in surgical and medical practice. Pathologists' Assistants contribute to the overall efficiency of the laboratory or pathology practice in a cost effective manner by performing a variety of tasks, consisting primarily of the gross examination of surgical pathology specimens and the performance of autopsies. Within our Laboratory Medicine Program, Pathologists' Assistants would be expected to concentrate mainly on the grossing of surgical specimens for those days on which our residents are not scheduled for grossing. Other duties performed by the Pathologists' Assistants would be at the discretion of the Site Chief. Our staff pathologists are prepared to devote sufficient time and patience to any necessary preliminary training of selected individuals in the procedures of specimen grossing.

Currently, staff pathologists and residents gross about 70% of all surgical specimens with the contribution from staff pathologists amounting to 30-35% of the total. The remainder of the gross workload is carried by selected laboratory technologists. The contribution to grossing by staff pathologists represents a considerable extra workload which erodes significantly into an individual staff pathologist's time needed for surgical pathology sign-out and the teaching of residents as well as other duties related to undergraduate teaching, research and administration. Alleviation of the pathologist's grossing workload will lead to shorter case turnaround times, improved patient care and reduced time and expense for the hospitalization of patients. In addition, pathologists will be able to devote more time and care to the teaching of residents, a significant factor in our efforts to improve the standard of diagnosis by the recruitment of high quality, well trained pathologists.

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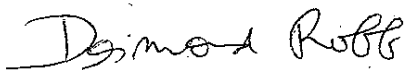
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As a teaching institution, we have a responsibility to foster various staff academic and scholarly activities including teaching and research, a process which also would be greatly facilitated by eliminating the current necessity for the time consuming grossing of surgical specimens. Finally, the acquisition of Pathologists' Assistants would free up a significant amount of valuable technologists' time currently taken up by specimen grossing.

Yours sincerely,



Desmond Robb

**CHAIR, DISCIPLINE OF LABORATORY MEDICINE
CHIEF, DIVISION OF IMMUNOLOGY, CYTOGENETICS
& MOLECULAR GENETICS**

DR:jlc

Copies to: **Dr. D. Cook**
 Mr. Terry Gulliver
 Mr. Barry Dyer