

DATE:	21 February 2023
TO:	All Physicians, Nursing, Laboratory Staff at RAH
FROM:	Anatomical Pathology, Royal Alexandra Hospital, Alberta Precision Laboratory
RE:	Process and Terminology for Priority Anatomical Pathology Requests at RAH

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Key Message

- Anatomical Pathology (AP), including surgical pathology and cytopathology, has established criteria for clinicians to order a request as either **Routine**, **STAT-Critical** or **STAT-Priority**.
- For **STAT-Critical** requests, the goal is to communicate an initial result within 24 hours from received time into the laboratory. The physician **MUST** request and obtain Pathologist approval by contacting the local Anatomic Pathology lab (**RAH AP phone: 780-735-4282** or call **RAH switchboard**, requesting the RAH Anatomic Pathology lab). If the laboratory is not contacted and approval is not provided, the sample will be processed as STAT-Priority.
- **STAT-Priority** requests are requests made to the AP Department to process and communicate an initial result in less than the routine target turnaround time.
- For any cases submitted to the AP lab where a preliminary result is required for clinical decision-making or the case has not been reported within the expected turnaround time listed below, providers are encouraged to call the local Anatomic Pathology lab and speak to the responsible pathologist.
- The size of tissue sample and other factors may require additional processing time.
- Ensure **relevant clinical information/history and rationale** for any escalation is provided and consultation with the pathologists occurs for STAT-Critical requests.

Background

- Provincial definitions for 'Critical' and 'Priority' requests were established in 2017 for AP specimens. The goal was to provide initial reports for critical cases within 24 hours and for priority cases, in less than the routine turnaround time.
- This laboratory policy was updated in May 2022 to include the workflow and terminology in Connect Care:
[New Terminology for Priority Anatomical Pathology Requests \(albertahealthservices.ca\)](https://www.albertahealthservices.ca/new-terminology-for-priority-anatomical-pathology-requests)
- Quality turn around time metrics have been established for AP. The goal is to provide an initial report for "routine" cases as follows:
 - a. Surgical Pathology HL 4 (i.e. routine biopsies) = within 4 working days
 - b. Surgical Pathology HL 5 & 6 (i.e. complex cases) = within 6 working days
 - c. Non-gynecological cytopathology cases = within 3 working days
- If a report is needed to inform patient management decisions before these quality turnaround time targets, a STAT-Critical or STAT-Priority may be ordered.



How will this impact you

- All STAT-Critical requests must be verbally approved by a pathologist prior to submitting to the lab
- Order the request as 'STAT' in Connect Care. If a request has not been verbally approved, it will be treated as STAT-Priority in the laboratory.

Action Required

When requesting a STAT-Critical:

- The requesting physician **MUST** contact the appropriate Pathologist **verbally** to request STAT-Critical processing and reporting and the pathologist must approve the request.
- Order the request as STAT in Connect Care.
- Must have supporting clinical information to indicate the reason for the request.
 - **Note:** the approving Pathologist (or designate) can downgrade the request to STAT-Priority if supporting medical information is not provided.
- Test request must include the physician's direct contact information.

When requesting a STAT-Priority:

- Order the request as STAT in Connect Care.
- Must have supporting clinical information to indicate the reason for the request.
 - **Note:** the approving Pathologist (or designate) can downgrade the request to routine if supporting medical information is not provided.
- Test request must include physicians' direct contact information.

Effective Immediately

Questions/Concerns may be directed to the **RAH AP lab** by:

- Phone: **780-735-4282** or
- **RAH Switchboard** – requesting 'RAH Anatomic Pathology lab'

Approved by

- Dr. Michael Mengel, Medical Director, North Sector
- Dr. Rizwan Rasheed, Site Chief, Royal Alexandra Hospital