

DATE:	1 May 2023
TO:	All Physicians, Nursing, Laboratory Staff
FROM:	Anatomical Pathology, Alberta Precision Laboratory
RE:	Terminology for Priority Anatomical Pathology Requests

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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 new sites implementing Connect Care – ensure standardized terms and ordering functions are followed for priority and STAT-Critical requests.
- 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 laboratory following local laboratory processes. 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.
- 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 October 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.
- Prior to the establishment of standard terms and processes for cases requiring faster than routine processing and reporting, there was uncertainty for both AP staff and clinicians for how a case would be handled and the expected date of the report.
- 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
 - d. Gynecological cytopathology cases = within 7 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.



- **EPIC Sites:** 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.
- **Non EPIC Sites:** Complete the Anatomical Pathology Requisition (Consultation Request): <https://www.albertahealthservices.ca/frm-19027.pdf>
- For STAT-Critical requests: Contact the laboratory to request/obtain approval from the designated pathologist and write "STAT" in the clinical information section.
- For STAT-Priority requests, check the **Priority** box on the requisition.

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.
 - The request must be clearly labeled as a **STAT** (either in EPIC or on the requisition).
 - 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:**
 - The request must be clearly labeled as STAT-Priority.
 - In EPIC, select "STAT". If ordering through the paper requisition, check the " **Priority**" box.
 - 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

- Contact your local Anatomical Pathology/Cytopathology laboratory

Approved by

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