**To: Dartmouth Health Providers**

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**Date: June 25, 2025**

**RE:** **Pathology Report Turnaround Times and Staffing Response**

**Situation:**

Concerns have been raised regarding significant delays in pathology report turnaround times (TAT), which have resulted in delayed patient follow-ups and negatively impacted revenue cycle operations and billing processes due to coding delays.

**Background:**  
Dartmouth Health has experienced an unprecedented increase in clinic and surgical activities, leading to a substantial rise in pathology specimen volumes (46%-75%, depending on the month) during the first half of this calendar year compared to the same period last year. This surge has directly affected turnaround times and created a specimen processing backlog, causing delays in patient follow-ups, timely case coding, and revenue cycle management. Additionally, pathology laboratories nationwide face prolonged TAT due to ongoing shortages of histotechnologists and pathology assistants (PAs).

**Assessment:**  
Despite national staffing shortages, our department has actively responded to these challenges. We have secured significant resources and support from DH Senior Leadership, enabling the hiring of additional permanent staff and temporary travelers specifically dedicated to specimen processing. Histology operations have expanded to a continuous 24/7 schedule. We have recruited four additional PAs; three are being onboarded, and one will join within the next month, increasing our total to ten. Recruitment efforts for histotechnologist vacancies continue aggressively. Furthermore, we have successfully recruited additional new and replacement pathologists who will onboard during the summer and early fall.

**Recommendation:**  
We will continue prioritizing recruitment and resource allocation to manage the increased workload and backlog effectively. All specimens will continue to be processed on a first-in, first-out basis, with priority given to critical results and malignancy diagnoses. We anticipate significant improvements in our TAT and backlog reduction throughout the summer as staffing continues to improve. Your continued patience, support, and collaboration during this challenging period are greatly appreciated.

**For questions or additional information, please contact:**

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