

## MEMORANDUM

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**To:** Provincial and Territorial Ministries of Health  
Postgraduate Deans and Deans of Faculties of Medicine  
Postgraduate Managers  
Royal College Specialty Committee Chairs  
Canadian Resident Matching Service (CaRMS)  
Collège des médecins du Québec (CMQ)  
The College of Family Physicians of Canada (CFPC)  
Fédération des médecins résidents du Québec (FMRQ)  
Resident Doctors of Canada (RDoC)  
Federation of Medical Regulatory Authorities of Canada (FMRAC)  
HealthCareCAN  
Medical Council of Canada (MCC)  
National Specialty Societies  
Provincial and Territorial Medical Associations  
Royal College Committees:

- Accreditation Committee
- Assessment Committee
- Committee on Specialties
- Committee on Specialty Education
- Examination Committee
- Specialty Standards Review Committee

**From:** Damon Dagnone, MD, FRCPC, Director, Standards and Accreditation,  
Royal College

**Subject:** Discipline Name Changes: Anatomical Pathology and General  
Pathology

**Date:** June 19, 2023

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Recognizing the importance of communications with our stakeholders and transparency in committee decision-making, the Royal College is issuing this memo to notify you that decision-making bodies of the Royal College have formally approved two discipline name changes. These name changes impact two primary specialties:

- Anatomical Pathology has changed to *Diagnostic and Molecular Pathology*, and
- General Pathology has changed to *Diagnostic and Clinical Pathology*.

### Background

As stipulated in the Royal College Policy on Discipline Name Change, the Committee on Specialties (COS) has the mandate to consider requests from the relevant specialty or AFC (sub)committee or working group for a change in discipline name, and to determine whether the request constitutes a *major* or *minor* change. The COS evaluates these requests against broad criteria, including the impact of the name change on the medical education system, the degree to which the proposed name change



increases consistency, clarity, and transparency, and the level of support for the name change among stakeholders. The determination regarding whether a name change is *minor* or *major* in nature impacts the decision pathway for these types of change requests.

During its fall 2022 meeting, the COS considered separate name change applications from the Specialty Committees in Anatomical Pathology and General Pathology. Based on its evaluation of both applications, the committee determined that:

- A. The request from Anatomical Pathology to change the name of the specialty to Diagnostic and Molecular Pathology represents a *major* change, and
- B. The request from General Pathology to change the name of the specialty to Diagnostic and Clinical Pathology represents a *minor* change.

#### **A. Major name change: Anatomical Pathology/Diagnostic and Molecular Pathology**

The COS' determination that this represents a *major* change was based upon the rationale that the level of support from laboratory and pathology disciplines was encouraging, but that some identified concerns raised important considerations warranting more extensive exploration, both within the laboratory medicine community and beyond, i.e., postgraduate offices, regulatory authorities, and ministries of health, etc. In accordance with the governing policy, *major* name changes must undergo a national consultation, and as such, the Royal College conducted a national consultation of partner organizations and groups between January and February 2023. An overview of the results from this consultation is available upon request, by contacting [cos@royalcollege.ca](mailto:cos@royalcollege.ca).

The application, along with the results of the national consultation, was re-evaluated by the COS in spring 2023. In considering the results of the consultation, the COS' concluded there was a compelling degree of support for the proposed name that outweighed expressions of opposition to it. Furthermore, the COS accepted remarks from the consultation that the term "molecular" is not meant to challenge the expertise of other pathology disciplines whose training and practice includes molecular techniques; rather, it is meant to reinforce within the discipline of Anatomical Pathology the marked integrated process required in establishing proper diagnosis, therapeutic prediction, and prognostication from tissue or cytologic specimens. The COS further recognized that this evolution and refinement of skills better reflects the current Entrustable Professional Activities (EPAs) within Anatomical Pathology's Competence by Design (CBD) curriculum, with a significant proportion of EPAs written to ensure that Canadian residents develop their ability to properly integrate molecular results and ancillary testing strategies into complete consultations.

Since the COS' recommendation to approve the name change, the application has been endorsed by the Committee on Specialty Education (CSE), the Executive Committee of Council (ECC), and the name change was formally approved by Council at its meeting on June 8-9<sup>th</sup>.

#### **B. Minor name change: General Pathology/Diagnostic and Clinical Pathology**

The COS' determination that this represents a *minor* change was based upon the rationale that the proposal was accompanied by broad support from other laboratory medicine disciplines, that the



proposed name affirms both the diagnostic and clinical aspects of the work of those who train and practice in this domain, and that it will promote a clearer and more precise public perception of the role of these specialists within the system of specialty medicine in Canada. As per the governing policy, and in accordance with the decision pathway for *minor* changes, a notice of intent toward the change was published via Royal College communication channels, including the [Royal College Newsroom](#), inviting feedback from partners and Fellows over a period of sixty days. Feedback was collated and reviewed by the Director, Standards and Accreditation, and the name change request was formally approved.

### **Next Steps**

The Royal College will implement the modification to the discipline names in accordance with its internal processes, and while the name changes are effective immediately, work across operational units to implement the changes will occur incrementally, beginning with editorial revisions to apply the new names to impacted standards documents.

If you have any questions or concerns, I invite you to contact me by email at [cos@royalcollege.ca](mailto:cos@royalcollege.ca).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Dagnone".

Damon Dagnone, MD, FRCPC  
Director, Standards and Accreditation  
Office of Standards and Assessment