



AMERICAN SOCIETY OF CYTOPATHOLOGY

STATEMENT TO CLIAC REGARDING CYTOTECHNOLOGY TRAINING AMERICAN SOCIETY OF CYTOPATHOLOGY

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The ASC wishes to re-iterate its concern regarding the impending decline of the cytotechnology workforce. Since the previous CLIAC meeting, the Cytotechnology Program at the University of Tennessee-Memphis has been informed that students accepted for the next academic year will not be allowed to matriculate, and that its current class will be its last. This program has trained cytotechnologists for over 50 years, and it has been one of the most respected and innovative cytotechnology training programs. The Director, Dr. Barbara Benstein had incorporated training in the latest technologies in cytology as well as molecular diagnostics into the program. Even with the advent of longer screening intervals due to human papillomavirus (HPV) testing, productivity increasing technologies such as image guided screening, and the HPV vaccine, it is reasonable to expect that the demand for morphologic screening of Pap tests will not drop to less than 50% of the current level. This estimate suggests that there will be approximately 30,000,000 Pap tests annually for the foreseeable future. The current number of Cytotechnology training programs is approximately 35% of what it was in the late 1970s, largely due to insufficient funding, and the average age of Cytotechnologists is 50. Cytotechnologists perform the initial examination of the vast majority of Pap tests. The loss of this capacity potentially endangers the reduction in cervical cancer of over 70% the last 50 years. The Cytology community is actively working to address this issue in innovative ways such as distance learning. We urge the CLIAC to encourage increased support for Cytotechnology training programs so that we can maintain the impressive reductions in cervical cancer which are attributable to the Pap test.