



Topic of Interest for Members

Micro Highlight #5 Announcing PNPL's First White Paper

Pathologists' Assistants in Non-Traditional Roles

for release: Friday, August 6, 2021

The *Panel of National Pathology Leaders* is pleased to announce the completion of its first commissioned white paper titled: *Pathologists' Assistants in Non-Traditional Roles: Uncovering the Hidden Value in Your Laboratory and Translating the Value into Compensation*.

Pathologists' Assistants (PathAs) are highly trained allied health professionals who bring value to the pathology practice. Conceived to complement and extend pathologists, PathAs have been involved in the traditional roles of macroscopic examination ("grossing"), frozen sections, and autopsy since the profession was developed in the 1970s as a response to the workforce shortage in pathology.

PathAs are also well suited for handling a wide range of non-traditional roles, including:

- Administrative and operational
- Financial
- Quality assurance
- Education and research
- Regulatory and compliance
- Information technology



However, they are often underutilized since PathA value is easier to see in traditional roles.

PNPL's white paper explores how these innovative and creative functions have the potential to evolve both pathology practices and the PathA profession. Using PathAs to the full extent of their abilities brings value to hospital-based and private pathology practices, healthcare systems, PathAs, and patients through:

- Improved quality of care
- Saving pathologists time
- Increased revenues
- Enhanced department and practice reputation

The often-overlooked impact of growth opportunities, diversity, and mentoring on job satisfaction and employee retention is also presented in the context of long-term added value.

Currently available **exclusively to PNPL Members**, the paper has been submitted to the *Archives of Pathology and Laboratory Medicine* and is under review for publication. The research methodology included a literature analysis and interviews with more than a dozen PathAs working in non-traditional roles, as well as with several pathologists.

Author Heather Gaburo, PA(ASCP)^{CM}, is a 2009 graduate of Quinnipiac University's Pathologists' Assistant program. For the past 12 years, she has worked with pathology practices in community, academic, and research settings in Southern California.

PNPL's *Incentive Plan for Pathologists' Assistants*, a **companion piece** to the white paper, is scheduled for release later this year.

For more information, contact info@pathleaders.org.