

Memorandum in Support

S.4097-A DeFrancisco / A.6124-A Magnarelli

This memorandum urges your support of S.4097-A DeFrancisco / A.6124-A Magnarelli to extend the expiration date for limited licenses in the Clinical Laboratory Technology Practice Act. The extension of limited licenses to September 1, 2016 will enable qualified laboratory personnel, whose education and training do not fit within existing licensure categories, to obtain a limited license while working to meet the full licensure requirements.

In 2005, New York State developed licensure requirements for clinical laboratory personnel through the Clinical Laboratory Technology Practice Act of New York (A.8094-B/S.3762-B), which added Article 165 to the Education Law. This created three licensure categories: Clinical Laboratory Technologist, Cytotechnologist and Clinical Laboratory Technician. In 2008, related legislation (A.10945-A/S.8117-B), which included a provision to amend Article 165 to add the licensure category of Histological Technician, was also passed and signed into law. Although licensure is required, as the duties of a pathologists' assistant fall under the definition of clinical laboratory technology, no specific pathway or category for pathologists' assistants exists to obtain licensure in New York State. A grandfathering period allowed a practicing pathologists' assistant to obtain a limited license in an existing category based on various special provisions, including experience and/or education and attestation by laboratory directors. The limited license pathway is currently set to expire September 1, 2013.

Hospitals and other laboratories in New York State will face a significant challenge in recruiting lab personnel trained as pathologists' assistants after Sept. 1st. A pathologists' assistant is an intensively trained allied health professional who provides anatomic pathology services under the direction and supervision of a pathologist. Oftentimes a pathologists' assistant is the first person to look at a sample, ranging from a biopsy from a physician's office to an organ tissue that has been removed from a patient in the operating room. They are primarily responsible for examination and dissection of the sample, describing the anatomic features of the sample with the bare eye and assessing the extent of the pathologic process. They decide which tissue is selected for histological examination and ultimately microscopic review by the pathologist. In addition they assist in taking photographs of specimens and in obtaining biological samples, such as blood, tissue and toxicological material for studies. Pathologists' assistants are used in hospitals and independent laboratories across the state and are in particular demand at academic medical centers. In addition, a pathologist assistant may be involved in the performance of autopsies including evisceration and dissection of organs. They play a vital role in laboratories in the examination of tissues both for clinical purposes and for autopsies. A limited license would allow such a person to work within the parameters of the limited license in clinical laboratory technology or histological technician, while working to meet the full licensure requirements.

If you have any questions or would like additional information, please do not hesitate to contact Gilda Ventresca Ecroyd at gilda.ventresca-ecroyd@nyumc.org or 212-404-4077 or Ashley Morrissey at ashley.morrissey@nyumc.org or at 212-404-4086.