

## **FACTORS TO CONSIDER FOR THE CONTRACTING OF PATHOLOGY SERVICES BY HOSPITALS AND CLINICS**

In the changing healthcare professional environment, it is increasingly important to provide healthcare services that improve the quality of patient care, helping to reduce costs and at the same time, increasingly improve the doctor-patient relationship. If the hospital is looking to hire an external laboratory to manage and operate the pathology department and services within its facility or if you prefer to fully outsource its pathology services, hiring an external laboratory may be a good strategy. Experts say that many hospitals are more likely to cut costs through outsourcing.

### **Reduce the administrative burden**

An external pathology laboratory is in charge of the direction of the anatomical pathology services and sometimes agreements can be reached for the medical direction of the clinical laboratory or blood bank. Laboratory management will perform all quality control reports for state and local accreditation boards and cancer centers related to pathology services including PQRS (Physician Quality Reporting System) indicators.

The laboratory assumes the work on distribution, collection and inventory and frees up space on the physical plant of the hospital in the event that the contracted laboratory uses its external facilities to process hospital cases.

The external laboratory is responsible for billing and collection of deductibles in addition to having a customer service department, either to medical personnel or to patients.

When choosing an external pathology laboratory, it must improve the satisfaction of the doctor by hiring a laboratory in which the delivery of the results is the fastest. Delays in the results lead to their patients spending more days hospitalized, raising costs to the patient, the hospital and the medical plans. It must also have the highest quality and most accurate diagnoses and a large faculty of pathologists available for in-person or telephone consultations. It must also offer intraoperative consultations and "Tumor Boards". With a histochemistry, molecular and clinical reference laboratory, all your results come from the same place.

The laboratory must have Electronic Medical Record options so that the hospital can comply with the "Meaningful use" established by the "Affordable Care Act" (Obama Care)

To improve the quality of the service, you must select a laboratory that has a high number of subspecialty pathologists as well as general pathologists with years of experience and leadership within the medical community of Puerto Rico certified (Board Certified) by the CAP in Anatomical and Clinical Pathology, Gastro pathology, Dermatopathology, Hematopathology, Hepatology, Cytopathology, Neuropathology, Immunopathology, among others, so that

diagnoses are in expert hands and it is not necessary to repeat procedures or send tests outside of Puerto Rico, which delays the results. The laboratory must have a broad testing profile, improving the continuity of care for its patients and the coordination of their care.

A successful relationship between the hospital and the laboratory is beneficial for all parties involved.