

"PATHOLOGY: A CAREER IN MEDICINE"

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Dr. Sanford is kicking off our first Pathology Club Meeting with a discussion on Pathology: A Career in Medicine. She explains how pathologists have multiple roles in the medical community. They serve as:

- **Diagnostician**
- **Teacher**
- **Scientific Researcher**

One of the primary duties of a pathologist is to diagnose patients, stage patients with malignancies and advise on the course of treatment. They also identify inherited and acquired pathological conditions using biopsied tissues and collected fluids that are observed, analyzed and tested in the laboratory. They perform routine autopsies in the hospital to confirm clinical impressions, determine cause of death, and to identify any potentially inherited conditions. Specialists in forensic pathology perform medico-legal autopsies to determine the cause or manner of death, attend crime scene investigations, manage evidence procurement, and provide courtroom testimony.

It is also the pathologist who sets up and manages clinical testing laboratories. As laboratory directors, they are responsible for the overall quality of the work, implementation of new technologies, as well as maintaining qualified laboratory staff with guidance regarding testing issues and continuing medical education. Most importantly, they are responsible for insuring high quality in patient care.

Importantly, at VCUHS and other teaching hospitals, pathologists are a vital part of the teaching faculty. They contribute to undergraduate medical school education, resident education and training, graduate education and research, and fellowship training.

Overall, pathology is a fascinating specialty offering a wide variety of career choices for academic or private practice. The pathologist's work day is typically eight to ten hours with some on-call weeks. There are job opportunities in a variety of different settings such as:

- **Community Hospitals**
- **Private/Group Practice**
- **Clinics**
- **Health Care Facilities**
- **Independent Laboratories**
- **Medical Schools**
- **Military**
- **Federal Government Agencies (NIH, FDA)**
- **State Government**
- **Pharmaceutical/Biotech Companies**

Medical students at VCU Medical Center have a great opportunity to take advantage of opportunities to learn pathology by reviewing their patients' history with a pathologist or pathology resident; by shadowing a pathologist or pathology resident; and by taking pathology electives or participating in pathology research.

For more information and to shadow a pathologist or work in pathology research, please contact Dr. Sanford or Dr. Grimes by email.

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