HRLMP successfully navigates the first Multi-site Remote IQMH Peer Assessment in Canada

Every four years, HRLMP is subject to a Peer Assessment by the Institute for Quality Management in Healthcare (IQMH), evaluating our conformance to nearly 500 requirements to maintain our ISO15189 Plus Accreditation. Our visit was originally scheduled for April 2020; however, due to the evolving COVID-19 pandemic, the decision was made to postpone until October 26-30th. IQMH assembled a team of nine experienced assessors to review HRLMP practices and procedures to ensure the ongoing integrity of our Laboratory Quality Management System (QMS). Departments across HRLMP worked diligently to collect evidence and ensure that their areas were “inspection ready”. With less than two weeks until the assessors were expected to arrive on site, the Quality Team was thrown another curveball - the assessment would be conducted VIRTUALLY!

This remote style of assessment was new to both HRLMP and IQMH. In fact, HRLMP was invited to be the first multi-site facility in Canada to participate in a peer assessment conducted this way. It would be a learning experience for both parties. Never one to shy away from a challenge, and not wanting to further delay this important aspect of monitoring the quality of our services, the Quality Team had to quickly pivot and determine how to accommodate a virtual visit.
While HRLMP laboratories feature state-of-the-art instrumentation for examinations, the departments are technology-poor with respect to devices to help support a virtual assessment. The assessment team expected both a video component for each “wet” lab space to view the physical layout and speak to as many staff as possible about their processes, in addition to a desk review of supporting evidence. Most desktop computers across our seven sites do not have audio-visual capabilities so arrangements were made to ensure departments had laptops or other devices and, in many cases, a dedicated “dry” room to have these conversations with the IQMH assessors. Liaising with the IT department at each corporation, the Quality Team acquired loaner laptops for the week-long visit and the Core Laboratories offered to use iPads provided by a vendor for the video component in their areas.

Susie transporting laptops, devices and evidence binders’ site-to-site.

Another challenge was that IQMH required the use of the Microsoft Teams meeting platform to conduct the visit. HHS and SJHH previously adopted Zoom as their platform of choice and the Quality Team collaborated with IT to ensure firewalls would not interfere with our ability to communicate with the IQMH team.

Public Relations at each corporation was also consulted about patient-facing processes that IQMH was required to trace virtually, specifically at the Specimen Collection Centres and for blood product administration. Different consent policies at each corporation were considered to ensure our clients were informed of the accreditation process and that privacy was maintained.

Despite these preparation challenges, and a few minor bumps throughout that week, the virtual visit was a success thanks to the productive collaboration between HRLMP staff and IQMH assessors! HRLMP met an impressive 95.5% of the 468 accreditation requirements assessed during the visit. We saw an increase in staff attendance during the Opening and Summation meetings; it was encouraging to see more staff engaged in the accreditation process. The IQMH assessors provided ample positive feedback about their experience assessing our multi-site program.

A sampling of the feedback provided by IQMH assessors included:

- “I wanted to tell you how impressed I am with the Hamilton group. You have an amazing group and we are all very lucky to have this organization supporting health care for your region and beyond”
- “Thanks to the 20+ pathology staff who made this visit a success”
- “HRLMP has a well-established instrument troubleshooting process”
- “The CQI initiative is outstanding”
- “Very knowledgeable staff and a great experience”
- “Flow Cytometry had QC reagent templates that raise the bar in quality”
- “Safety program is above and beyond expectation”

The Quality Team would like to extend a warm thank you to everyone who contributed to the success of this accreditation visit. Over the next few months, teams across HRLMP will focus on addressing the non-conformances and correcting the gaps identified by the IQMH assessors. These
improvements continue to build on HRLMP’s robust Quality Management System.

Submitted by: The HRLMP Quality Team

Snapshot showing some of the 65 individuals who attended the Summation meeting.

News from Administration

Manager, Transfusion Medicine

It is with pleasure that we announce that Evangelos (Evan) Petropoulos is the Manager, Transfusion Medicine, effective December 7th.

Evan brings back over 6 years of progressive experience within Core, then HLA labs at HRLMP and is returning to us from his current position as Technical Specialist/Senior Supervisor at Canadian Blood Services in Brampton. He also worked in Transfusion Medicine at Joseph Brant Hospital in Burlington.

He holds an Honours BSc in Molecular Biology, Advanced Diploma in Medical Laboratory Science, Histocompatibility Specialist Certificate and is currently completing his Health Care Management Certificate.

Please join us in welcoming Evan back to the HRLMP!

HRLMP Quality Specialist

We are also pleased to announce that Anna Haasen has accepted the position of HRLMP Quality Specialist.

Anna has filled this position temporarily since September 2018 and during this time has acquired an in-depth knowledge of the HRLMP Quality Management System and a thorough understanding of Ontario’s Laboratory Accreditation process and IQMH requirements. Anna acts as a peer assessor for the IQMH Accreditation Program in Molecular Diagnostics and Cytogenetics.

We wish Anna continued success in this role.
**Covid Project Manager, HRLMP**

We are pleased to announce the appointment of Elizabeth (Liz) O’Sullivan as the Covid Project Manager, effective October 27th.

Liz is an accomplished health care professional with experience in community and teaching hospitals locally and in Manitoba. Her most recent experience includes senior roles at both HHS and SJHH. Liz is an Associate Clinical Professor in the School of Nursing at McMaster University.

This newly-established role has been created to assist us in the management of our Covid response, and to optimize our efficiencies in the areas of quality, flow and process improvement.

Please join us in making Liz feel welcome in her new position!

We would like to announce Joanne Warner has accepted the position of HRLMP Clerical Supervisor effective October 26, 2020.

We would also like to thank Spencer Brown for his work in our Core laboratories and his collaboration with the Quality Team. Spencer consistently demonstrated his commitment to ensuring quality patient care and we wish him all the best in his retirement.

**Project Odyssey**

HHS has officially launched Project Odyssey which will oversee the implementation of EPIC across HHS.

The HRLMP has established our EPIC Project Team. This team will be led by Liz Feeney, Workstream Team Leader.

The 10 successful candidates to the HIS Project-Clinical Informatics Specialist roles who will be working with the HRLMP are:

- Alannah Medeiros
- Brittany Antoniuk
- Crystal Woodside
- Colleen Coupe
- Julia Celebre
- Lesley Roik
- Lisa Susi
- Natalie Fair
- Tim Kulikowski
- Trevor Denanauth

Please join us in welcoming these individuals in supporting the HRLMP and the HIS Project.

**Education News**

To all of our incredible medical laboratory professionals: thank you. You work hard around the clock, and behind the scenes, to support our health care system and protect our health - and we are so grateful. Learn more about these unsung heroes and the IndigoLabCoat.

~Prime Minister Justin Trudeau

Great idea from CSMLS to bring awareness of the essential work of medical lab professionals. The IndigoLabCoat is printed in microscopic indigo type with the names of the lab tests performed 1.2 million times each day in Canada.

~Dr. Teresa Tam

To learn more about CSMLS Indigo Lab Coat initiative, click on the link below:

https://www.indigolabcoat.ca/
Michelle Hoad, CEO for the MLPAO, published an opinion piece in the *Hamilton Spectator* December 2, 2020 regarding the Ontario Auditor General’s report and the human resources challenges with MLTs.

Click the link below to read the write-up:

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**News from Genetics**

*Congratulations* to Emily McDonald, MLT for being awarded the *Margie Patterson Memorial Scholarship in Molecular Genetics* from the Michener Institute.

This award was established in 2005 in memory of Margie Patterson, a Medical Laboratory Technologist who graduated from McMaster University and who worked for many years in the Provincial Hemoglobinopathy DNA Diagnostic Laboratory at HRLMP.

This award is presented to a Michener Institute student who achieved excellence in molecular genetics studies, who demonstrated excellent technical skills in the laboratory and who exhibited professional behavior in both academic and health care settings.

*Well done Emily!*

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We would also like to congratulate our Canadian College of Medical Genetics (CCMG) fellows Dr. Darci Butcher and Dr. Laila Cigana Schenkel Magalhaes on successful completion of the certifying examinations in molecular genetics!

Dr. Butcher recently joined the HRLMP Genetics Laboratory, as Head of Molecular Genomics. Dr. Cigana Schenkel Magalhaes is a molecular geneticist at London Health Sciences Centre.

We would like to thank the CCMG Program Director Dr. Elizabeth McCreaddy, and training committee members: Dr. Murray Potter, Dr. John
Lab Connections

Waye, Dr. Suzanne Demczuk, Dr. Mariya Kozenko, Dr. Margaret Nowaczyk, Dr. Lauren Brick and Dr. Daria Grafodatskaya, as well as Department of Pathology & Molecular Medicine administrative staff Jessica Clark, Gina Furlong and Elena Bidochka. We also thank all staff in the laboratory and clinical genetics for making this training program a success!

Hematology News

Congratulations to Dr. Christine Ribic who will assume the role of Medical Director of Transplantation at SJHH on January 1, 2021.

Dr. Ribic is an active renal transplant Nephrologist, who has always brought a patient-centered focus to her clinical work and is a strong advocate for patients.

Over the past several years she has also been the Medical Director of the Histocompatibility Laboratory and has truly transformed the laboratory into one of the country’s best, and positioned it to properly support the increasingly busy and immunologically complex renal transplant program here.

To read the full interview, click on the link below:

The full article can be accessed through:

Congratulations to Dr. Ronnie Barr who has been named a Member of the Order of Canada for his work in pediatric hematology/oncology, especially with respect in the care of adolescents and young adults.

This is a wonderful and well-deserved recognition of Dr. Barr’s exemplary work and outstanding contributions to the field.

Click on the links below for the articles:
https://urldefense.com/v3/__https://dailynews.mcmaster.ca/articles/mcmaster-alumni-faculty-and-friends-named-to-order-of-canada__;!!JB7FzAlcOSJG1QuvVny5PLxt1zHYeCdtjZH0r1JGo9i8sUvnw4W6RDx1d28agt8AS

Recently, Dr. Sam Schulman, a Hematologist and an internationally recognized Thrombosis Specialist at HHS General Site, was interviewed regarding a recent review article Venous Thromboembolism in COVID-19 published in Thrombosis Haemostasis.

Dr. Schulman stated “We wrote this review because we felt that it was important to summarize the latest data on COVID-19 and thromboembolism. There are already over 1,800 publications on the topic, so it is a tough chore for the clinician to tease out what is important.”

Click on the links below for the articles:
https://urldefense.com/v3/__https://dailynews.mcmaster.ca/articles/mcmaster-alumni-faculty-and-friends-named-to-order-of-canada__;!!JB7FzAlcOSJG1QuvVny5PLxt1zHYeCdtjZH0r1JGo9i8sUvnw4W6RDx1d28agt8AS

Dr. Sam Schulman

Venous Thromboembolism in COVID19

Recently, Dr. Sam Schulman, a Hematologist and an internationally recognized Thrombosis Specialist
On November 13, 2020 we bid farewell to Laura Elson after 24 years of service. She was known for her efficiency and helpfulness and will be missed in the Hematology Office.

Happy Retirement Laura!

News from Pathology

Closure of the Hamilton Regional Forensic Pathology Unit at McMaster University and the Hamilton Regional Laboratory Medicine Program

Sadly, our Hamilton Regional Forensic Pathology Unit at the Hamilton General Hospital has closed its doors with all the work moved to the Ontario Forensic Pathology Service in Toronto. We felt it important to acknowledge the importance of this event and to celebrate the amazing and rich history of the Regional Forensic Unit.

Excerpts from Dr. David King’s write-up entitled “The Demise of the Forensic Unit” are woven throughout this article. Dr. King is a past Chief of the Hamilton Regional Forensic Pathology Unit.

“On March 31st 2020, after one hundred years of continuous service, the last coroner’s post mortem was performed in the forensic unit at the Hamilton General Hospital. They had been done there since the end of the First World War when Dr. William Deadman was appointed the city pathologist. These examinations were separate from his hospital work and were done at the direction of the coroners. He continued this work in the interwar years, through the war and into the 50’s and early 60’s. Without doubt his most famous case was the so-called Torso murder of 1946.

In 1969, following the formation of the McMaster University Medical School, the forensic department became a teaching unit of the department of pathology under Dr. Herb Foster who had succeeded Dr. Deadman. He, in turn, was succeeded in 1977 by Dr. James Ferris, an academically trained forensic pathologist from the UK. The workload steadily increased, cases coming in from the surrounding regions, at times the unit handling up to 800 post mortems annually, significantly more than any other centre in Ontario except Toronto”. ~Dr. David King

This unit was highly respected by the police and the community and the forensic support staff were extremely loyal and caring.

“For many years Dr. King had had an interest in raising the profile of forensic pathology in Canada and in increasing the standard of practice of the work with a view to eventually having it recognized by the Royal College as a sub-specialty of pathology. There was only a very small group of like-minded pathologists across the country and they had limited success. However, at about the time that he retired in 2001, several pathologists in Ottawa formed an ad hoc group to present a case to the Royal College and, because of his long interest, they asked Dr. King to join them. In 2003 they were at last successful and Dr. King had the satisfaction of being appointed a member of the Royal College forensic pathology examination panel.”
board. He and other members of the board (later including Dr. John Fernandes), were awarded the designation ‘Founder, Forensic Pathology’. Although officially retired in 2001, Dr. King continued to work full-time until mid 2002 when Dr. Fernandes replaced him. He continued part-time until 2010”. ~Dr. David King

For a number of years Dr. King taught at both the Ontario Police College, Aylmer and the Canadian Police College in Ottawa. He also lectured at several Canadian Armed Forces bases across Canada. He had a special interest in gunshot wounds and lectured to many groups on the subject.

“A Dr. Rao contributed significantly to the McMaster undergraduate medical school programme giving tutorials and also acting as a student mentor. She had a special interest in paediatric forensic pathology with special expertise in sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS) and child abuse. This is a subject that requires constant updating and she was a member of several special committees, namely the Chief Coroner’s Death under 5 Review Committee; the MUMC Child Advocacy and Assessment Programme; the Regional Child Welfare Committee (Hamilton Wentworth). She also served on the Ontario Forensic Pathology Advisory committee”. ~Dr. David King

A newspaper article about Dr. Rao was entitled “The MOM of the Lab”.

In addition to her reputation as an expert in child abuse cases and sudden infant death syndrome, Dr. Rao was clearly ahead of her time in ensuring the practice of wellness and work life balance.

The last chief of this department was well known to many of us and we were all saddened by his untimely death in April 2019. He was also the laboratory director for the HRLMP. Dr. John Fernandes, who came to Hamilton in 2002, testified at many high-profile murder cases, including in 2016 at the trial of the convicted killers of Tim Bosma, Dellen Millard and Mark Smich. In 2015 he helped raise the alarm of the devastation the opioid crisis was causing in Hamilton.

He was also involved in teaching forensic medicine in Hamilton and nationally at the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada as well as in the police community.