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Building organized pathology in Ontario: The Ontario Association of Pathologists, laboratory approval, and regional pathology services, 1937–1966

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ABSTRACT

This article examines the founding of the Ontario Association of Pathologists (OAP) and the development of Ontario's early province-wide pathology service network between 1937 and 1966. In 1937, the Ontario Department of Health introduced a system requiring surgical pathology specimens to be examined by approved pathologists working in approved hospitals or laboratories. The initiative responded to increasing workload at the Central Public Health Laboratories and the need for reliable diagnostic pathology outside Toronto. Using OAP archival material and selected published sources, the article reconstructs the creation of the Advisory Board in Pathology, the first approval lists for pathologists and laboratories, the formation of the OAP, and the later use of the same professional and institutional network in the Regional Pathologist System for medicolegal autopsy service. The Ontario experience shows how government regulation, professional self-organization, laboratory approval, and regional service delivery combined to create an early model of organized pathology and laboratory medicine in Canada.