

Role of Pathologists

Effective treatment begins with the right diagnosis.

Pathologists are medical doctors who are critical members of the health care team, combining a scientist's understanding of what laboratory evidence suggests and a specialty physician's knowledge of medicine to determine the correct diagnosis.

Who they are



Pathologists are physicians and diagnostic experts. On any given day, their work impacts nearly all aspects of patient care—from diagnosing cancer and chronic disease to prevention and primary care.

Pathologists play a critical role improving patient outcomes and reining in escalating health care costs as they:

- Enhance care coordination among the health care team
- Strengthen the value and continuity of clinical outcomes information
- Support evidence-based outcomes research
- Deliver greater efficiency for health dollars

Their role

Who they care for

Pathologists often are the first physicians to diagnose, for example, common patient illnesses, such as diabetes and elevated cholesterol. Physicians also rely on pathologists to interpret Pap tests to determine if cancerous cells exist.



Pathologists determine the right test, at the right time, for the right patient. Pathologists also ensure laboratory quality and public health. They diagnose:

- Diseases by studying specimens, such as polyps and biopsies
- Genetic disorders by using molecular biology and genetics
- Skin diseases
- Nervous system diseases
- Diseases that affect blood cells
- Microbial agents that cause infections
- Fetal, infant, and childhood diseases

Overall, pathologists are responsible for the diagnostic accuracy of every test. They guarantee that patients receive fast, high-quality, and safe laboratory tests.

What they do



COLLEGE of AMERICAN
PATHOLOGISTS

The College of American Pathologists, the leading organization of board-certified pathologists, serves patients, pathologists, and the public by fostering and advocating excellence in the practice of pathology and laboratory medicine worldwide.

