

AMERICAN SOCIETY OF CYTOPATHOLOGY

*Defining and promoting excellence in cytopathology striving for the highest quality of patient care.*

  
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July 7, 2005

The Honorable Anthony J. Principi  
Chairman, 2005 Base Realignment and Closure Commission  
2521 South Clark Street, Suite 600  
Arlington, Virginia 22202

Dear Senator Principi:

The Armed Forces Institute of Pathology is a unique and irreplaceable entity that has served as a driving force of medical evolution and the repository of evidence of our understanding of disease processes. It is an international resource that provides clinical diagnosis, research and education in the pathogenesis and classification of disease, as we know it in the modern world. The expert pathologists at the AFIP who are consultants for the interpretation of difficult diagnostic challenges are the guardians of quality, the mentors of progress and the scribes of evidentiary documents that assure improvement of medical care, not only in America, not only for America's military, but for the world. The consultative investigations in areas like soft tissue pathology and tropical disease have enabled pathologists and their allied colleagues to diagnose and treat patients afflicted with complicated and life-threatening diseases that might have defied medical understanding and intervention. Publications such as the tumor fascicles have provided a reference benchmark for the performance of pathologists from community hospitals to university practices.

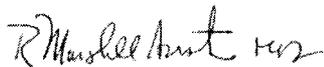
The unification of immeasurable and diverse diagnostic talents under one collaborative venue is priceless and to be cherished. It will be impossible to recreate.

The archival records of slides, tissues and documents must be preserved and retained in an active access mode if the medical science of understanding disease is to remain viable.

The strategy announced by the Department of Defense under *Base Realignment and Closure 2005* is reprehensible, and the actualization of the plan would be simply tragic. Such a decision is contrary to the codes of quality, patient safety, performance improvement and responsibility to patients that have driven quality medical care in America.

The Executive Board of the American Society of Cytopathology strongly urges you to oppose closure of the Armed Forces Institute of Pathology and prevent the loss of a most valuable resource in medicine.

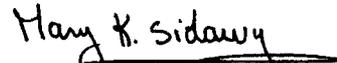
Respectfully,



R. Marshall Austin, M.D., Ph.D.  
President



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President-Elect

  
Mary K. Sidawy, M.D.  
Vice President

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