

Cytopathology in focus: Our appeal to program participants—return glass slides

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January 2022—A diverse and copious inventory of Pap and nongynecologic glass slides is the backbone of the CAP glass slide educational programs. Each year tens of thousands of cytopathology slides are packaged and mailed to laboratories enrolled in CAP educational glass slide programs throughout the world. Prior to mailing, numerous cytotechnologists and cytopathologists screen these slides and companion web enhancement images to ensure quality and diagnostic accuracy.

Once a glass slide is generously submitted to the educational programs, it undergoes rigorous review. Multiple members of the CAP Cytopathology Committee screen the slide, checking for slide quality and diagnostic accuracy. However, due to the COVID pandemic, the committee has been unable to meet in full capacity, where most screening takes place, resulting in a backlog of new slides that need to be screened before they can be circulated. While the committee has resumed partial in-person meetings and more screening is being performed, there is still catch-up that needs to be done to return our inventory to pre-pandemic levels.

To allow your colleagues the same opportunities to review irreplaceable material, please return the educational program slide sets to the CAP by the due date indicated on the result forms. While most participating laboratories are compliant with the requirement to return glass slides, with each activity that is mailed out about five to 10 percent of slide sets are not returned by the due date. With multiple mailings per year, this amounts to almost 30 percent of slide sets that are not returned or returned significantly later than the expected return date. If a slide set is not returned by the due date, this can cause a delay in the shipping of that material in the next scheduled mailing, which is a major factor affecting the CAP's ability to provide quality glass slides to all participants. Failure to return glass slides to the CAP results in the laboratory being fined \$500 and possible suspension from the next mailed activity.

These programs are for the educational benefit of all who enroll. To maintain them, we must maintain our glass slide inventory. Please help us in our effort to ensure the quality of our cytopathology glass slide educational programs.□

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