

<b>DATE:</b>	27 October 2025
<b>TO:</b>	Oncologists, Province Wide
<b>FROM:</b>	Edmonton and Calgary Zone Immunohistochemistry Laboratory, Alberta Precision Laboratories (APL)
<b>RE:</b>	<b>PD-L1 22-C3 Testing for Neoadjuvant Followed by Adjuvant Therapy for Resectable Locally Advanced HNSCC now Available in Alberta</b>

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### Key Message

- Oncologists are now able to submit requests.
- PD-L1 biomarker immunohistochemistry (IHC) testing on resectable locally advanced (stage III-IVA) head and neck squamous cell carcinoma can now be performed using the 22-C3 PD-L1 PharmDx kit.
- PD-L1 PharmDx 22-C3 determines eligibility for pembrolizumab as a neoadjuvant and adjuvant treatment.
- Samples must be formalin fixed. A 12-72hr fixation time is most ideal for testing.
- Decalcified tissue is not recommended for use, as false negative staining could be seen.

### Background

- PD-L1 IHC PharmDx 22-C3 is the required test to determine access to Pembrolizumab in the neoadjuvant setting followed by adjuvant treatment regimen in resectable, locally advanced (stage III-IVA) head and neck squamous cell carcinoma as outlined in the KEYNOTE-689 clinical trial.

### Action Required

- In Epic in the “*Request for Additional testing for Pathology Sample*” please select ‘**Head and Neck Squamous Cell Carcinoma – Pembrolizumab – 22C3**’ and under ‘**Neoadjuvant?**’ select “**YES**” to ensure the correct test and interpretation is performed on the requested surgical case.

**Effective**      **October 27,2025**

### Questions/Concerns

- *Calgary:* Dr. Martin Hyrcza [Martin.Hyrcza@albertaprecisionlabs.ca](mailto:Martin.Hyrcza@albertaprecisionlabs.ca) 403-944-4759
- *Edmonton:* Dr. Gilbert Bigras [Gilbert.Bigras@albertaprecisionlabs.ca](mailto:Gilbert.Bigras@albertaprecisionlabs.ca) 780-432-8445

### This bulletin has been reviewed and approved by

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- Dr. Kate O’Connor, Medical Director, South Sector, Alberta Precision Laboratories