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Program Director
Molecular Genetic Pathology Fellowship Program
Washington University School of Medicine in St. Louis
Department of Pathology & Immunology
660 S. Euclid Avenue
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Dear Program Director:

It is my pleasure to write in enthusiastic support of Lisa Chen, M.D. for the Molecular Genetic Pathology Fellowship at Washington University in Saint Louis. As Director of Molecular Diagnostics at Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center (MSK), I have supervised Dr. Chen closely during her current Surgical Pathology Fellowship and through her longitudinal work with our molecular service. Over the past decade I have mentored many residents and fellows; Dr. Chen stands out for her diagnostic maturity, analytic discipline, and consistently professional teamwork.

Dr. Chen's training trajectory is superb preparation for MGP. She earned her M.D. at Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine, completed AP/CP residency at Massachusetts General Hospital (Harvard Medical School), and arrived at MSK with a strong foundation in oncologic pathology and laboratory medicine. She quickly demonstrated reliable judgment under pressure and a sophisticated understanding of how molecular results must be integrated into a final interpretation that is clinically actionable.

On surgical pathology, Dr. Chen consistently anticipates the downstream molecular implications of her grossing and histologic decisions. During a thoracic sign-out week with multiple small biopsies and limited tumor content, she stewarded tissue carefully for immunohistochemistry and NGS, documented tumor cellularity clearly, and coordinated directly with molecular technologists to prevent avoidable repeats. Her reports were thoughtful, concise, and well supported, and she routinely followed results through to ensure timely communication with the treating teams.

Dr. Chen does not treat molecular testing as a "send-out" step. She participated in our molecular sign-out and variant review workflow, where she showed impressive command of assay selection, coverage metrics, and interpretation nuances. In a high-grade gynecologic carcinoma case with an initial profile suggesting mismatch repair deficiency, she reviewed the analytic quality indicators and recognized that low tumor fraction could explain the pattern. She proposed and helped coordinate microdissection-based re-extraction; the repeat study clarified the molecular status and prevented premature clinical conclusions. Her communication with the clinical team was clear, balanced, and appropriately cautious.

In addition, Dr. Chen takes initiative to improve systems. Noticing variability in how trainees estimated tumor percentage for NGS and documented pre-analytic factors, she drafted a practical tumor adequacy checklist aligned with our validation thresholds. After presenting it at fellow conference, we implemented the tool across the group, which the laboratory reported led to fewer adequacy-related clarifications for borderline specimens. This is representative of her style: observe, synthesize, propose a workable solution, and follow through collaboratively.

Dr. Chen is an excellent communicator and educator. She is humble, dependable, and calm on high-acuity services, and she explains molecular concepts with clarity by anchoring them to real cases. Residents frequently seek her out for guidance on selecting appropriate tests and framing clinically relevant, patient-centered interpretations.

In sum, Dr. Chen has the core competencies required to thrive in Molecular Genetic Pathology: a strong diagnostic foundation, disciplined analytic thinking, curiosity about assay performance and limitations, and a commitment to patient-centered laboratory practice. In my assessment, she ranks in the top 5% of trainees I have supervised at MSK for combined diagnostic acumen, leadership, and readiness for independent molecular sign-out.

I recommend Dr. Chen to your fellowship program without reservation and with the highest enthusiasm. I am confident she will contribute immediately as a thoughtful colleague and will develop into a leader in academic molecular pathology. Please feel free to contact me if I can provide any additional information.

Sincerely,

Helena Markovic, M.D., Ph.D.

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