

MLPAO  **APLMO**
Medical Laboratory Professionals' Association of Ontario
L'Association des professionnels des laboratoires médicaux de l'Ontario

November 4, 2020

Hon. Ross Romano
Minister of Colleges and Universities
5th Flr - 438 University Ave.
Toronto ON M7A 1N3

Hon. Monte McNaughton
Minister of Labour, Training and Skills Development
5th Flr - 438 University Ave.
Toronto ON M7A 1N3

RE: Training Programs for Ontario's Laboratories

Dear Minister Romano and Minister McNaughton,

As per our communication dated September 3rd, 2020, we applaud your government's investment in auto and advanced manufacturing training programs. In addition, we have been pleased to see more programs roll out over the last month: for trades, apprenticeship expenses, post-secondary mental health, PSW training, and more. These education initiatives are helping to foster Ontario's economic and COVID-19 recovery.

As we hope you are aware, there has been a long drought in our healthcare sector with regards to the need for Medical Laboratory Technologists (MLTs). Ontario laboratories need your focus now more than ever. 70% of laboratories entered the pandemic short-staffed and there is currently a waitlist at all five Ontario MLT programs.¹ This health human resource concern has become more urgent in the COVID-19 pandemic.

At a preliminary glance of data from the first 55 Ontario laboratory employers, we can already see an immediate need for 245 MLTs. Only 157 successful graduates passed the national certification exam required to join the workforce this year.² Even without the full dataset, the demand is almost double the supply.

We quickly surpassed 5 million COVID-19 tests this week, but the breakneck pace of the last 9 months means that medical laboratory professionals are experiencing burnout. 74% of surveyed laboratory employers noted turnaround times were affected by shortages of personnel.

We are currently approaching MLT programs at Ontario universities and colleges to discuss increasing seats, but we are also asking you to allocate directed funding to Ontario laboratories and medical laboratory professionals to attract and retain the workforce needed to continue to meet the province's growing COVID-19 testing targets.

Ontario's medical laboratories need the same cohesive approach the government is taking with training programs in other sectors. We would appreciate a brief meeting to discuss the above and Ontario's training plans to ensure testing capacity continues. We look forward to confirming a meeting with you soon.

Thanks,



Michelle Hoad, CAE
Chief Executive Officer
Medical Laboratory Professionals' Association of Ontario

¹ Based on a survey of 2212 lab leaders and professionals in May 2020.

² Of 166 who challenged the exam - comparable to previous years – 2019 (162) 2018 (166) 2017 (151). <https://www.csmls.org/Medical-Laboratory-Professionals/How-to-become-a-Medical-Lab-Professional/National-Report-Card-2018.aspx>.