



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

MEDIA STATEMENT: MEDICAL LABORATORY PROFESSIONALS NEED SUPPORT NOW

April 7, 2021 – Hamilton ON: “As we enter a third wave of COVID-19 with ICU numbers and variants of concern on the rise, medical laboratory professionals need our support and recognition now more than ever to make it through. Ontario’s medical laboratories have gone above and beyond processing over **13+ million COVID-19 tests** during this challenging time, in addition to the **244.8 million other lab tests conducted annually**.

With COVID-19 patients representing 504 out of the province’s 2,300 ICU beds, the last few days have marked a record high since the pandemic began. As ICU patients need round-the-clock testing, increases also result in a significant rise in medical laboratory testing. This third wave of COVID-19 has also brought new variants of concern (VOC). Although tests to determine the nature and spread of these new variants are being interpreted specifically by Public Health Ontario, they impact all medical laboratories. Not only does the addition of more easily transmissible variants increase initial COVID-19 testing demands to confirm diagnosis; it also affects testing for monitoring and patient care as more become hospitalized.

Medical laboratory professionals are already experiencing burnout meeting 24-hour testing demands for over a year. 70% of laboratories entered the pandemic short-staffed¹ and 86% of laboratory professionals experiencing burnout, some are contemplating exiting the field entirely or retiring early (37%) or at least stepping back for stress or sick leave (44%).² Lab professionals are working double shifts and postponing retirements.

With April 11th - 17th, 2021 being Medical Laboratory Week, the public has an opportunity to celebrate and bolster laboratories across the province and the country for their tremendous work to support healthcare. **Medical Laboratory Technologists (MLTs)** are regulated health professionals who analyze specimens to inform clinical decisions. **Medical Laboratory Assistant/Technicians (MLA/Ts)** take samples and perform many pre-analytical functions. They are often unrecognized healthcare heroes.

Medical laboratories are key to the recovery of our province and are ensuring the future is brighter. As morale falters, we need Ontarians to get together and support medical laboratory professionals, who are proud of their role in patient care and have had a very challenging year. Messages of recognition—either recorded or online—will go a very long way towards letting them know we see and appreciate what they are doing.

Please join us in recognizing their work – our campaign this year is themed “The Future is Bright.” Ontarians can show support by taking a picture wearing sunglasses or holding a #MedLabThx sign as a thank you to all lab professionals for the time and effort they have dedicated this past year to ensure we will have a chance to enjoy the upcoming sunshine this summer. These can be shared on social media using #MedLabThx and #MLWON2021. You can download a sign or post a thank-you message on our page at mlpao.org/thanks.

Every lab test performed in Ontario helps provide physicians with the information needed to make informed decisions about your health. Join us in celebrating medical laboratory professionals who are ensuring the future is brighter for all Ontarians.” - Michelle Hoad, CEO, Medical Laboratory Professionals’ Association of Ontario.

For further information: Danica Evering, Media Contact – 416-485-6768 x24 | devering@mlpao.org

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

² Based on a survey of medical laboratory professionals December 2020.