Dear Ms./Mr./Minister/MPP [NAME],

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My name is [YOUR NAME] and I am one of your constituents in [NAME OF RIDING]. I work as a [NAME OF YOUR ROLE] at [NAME OF YOUR WORKPLACE].

Medical laboratories impact all aspects of patient care, from emergency rooms to family medicine to mental health. **Combined, Medical Laboratory Technologists (MLTs) and Medical Laboratory Assistant/Technicians (MLA/Ts) process and interpret 280+ million lab tests annually and are the fourth largest healthcare profession after doctors, nurses, and pharmacists.** According to the CDC, 70% of medical decisions rely on laboratory results. We are an essential and often unrecognized part of the healthcare system.

Ontario is experiencing a severe shortage of MLTs - I am writing to urge your support of the Medical Laboratory Professionals' Association of Ontario's (MLPAO) 2024 Pre Budget-Submission to address this issue. MLPAO has five main recommendations for the Ontario government to include in the 2024 Budget to invest in the province’s medical labs.

1. $6.95M (over three years) for a Laboratory Externship Program (Clinical Placements) and Preceptors;
2. Provide Funding for a Scaffolding Program to Upskill MLA/Ts to MLTs and/or General MLTs to Genetic MLTs;
3. Expand the Learn and Stay Grant to More MLT Programs;
4. Enhance Recruitment and Retention Strategies for Medical Laboratory Professionals;
5. Funding for an Ontario Simulation Laboratory

MLPAO’s 2024 pre-budget submission can be found at, [mlpao.org/prebudgetsubmission](https://www.mlpao.org/prebudgetsubmission). These investments can be additional solutions to complement those made in Budget 2023 including expanding access to dual credit opportunities for high school students to take introductory courses in medical laboratory science and adding two MLT programs to the Learn and Stay Grant.

There are currently just 6091 practicing MLTs in Ontario with 38% eligible to retire within 2-4 years. COVID-19 has accelerated shortages, with 87% of medical laboratory professionals experiencing burnout and 42% contemplating leaving the field or retiring early. There is currently a need for 300 MLTs, exceeding new MLTs entering the job market (291) by a large margin. **We need the 2024 Budget to invest in labs, so that Ontarians can receive timely access to tests and results that impact their care.**

Working short-staffed is impacting us in the lab—we are exhausted. We care deeply about our patients and do everything we can to get the job done. My colleagues and I are afraid that quality of care will be impacted by turnaround time delays, lengthened hospital stays, and re-scheduled appointments.

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Will you join me in supporting MLPAO’s request? We have fought hard through COVID-19 and we need additional assistance now to make it through the next year and beyond including future pandemics.

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Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Name and contact information