

The healthcare professionals who staff Ontario's medical laboratories are set to see a large cohort retire in the next 4-8 years. This cohort that represents 44% of the medical laboratory professionals who we currently have no way of adequately replacing. This health human resource issue in Ontario's medical laboratories will have a rippling effect throughout out healthcare system, one that could undo much of the streamlining and progress the Ministry of Health and Long-Term care is looking to accomplish. This health human resource issue also has the potential to cost the province millions of dollars in lengthening hospital stays and increasing wait times, while simultaneously adding an additional barrier in accessing vital services particularly for those living in rural and remote communities.

MLPAO survey data collected across the province indicates the shortages are being experienced not in 4-8 years, but now, especially in rural and remote areas.

**Survey Results** *(Conducted by MLPAO July 22, 2019 - Out of 222 Ontario Laboratories, 74 responded = 33% response rate):*

- ✓ 65% of the listed openings were for General Medical Laboratory Technologists
- ✓ 45% of the General MLT openings were in Rural and Remote Areas
- ✓ 60% of all the MLT openings in Rural and Remote laboratories have been on the market for 12+ months.

**Action Required Now:**

1. Request that the government consider investing a rural and remote laboratory strategy including a reimbursement program for those willing to relocate.
2. The MLPAO will implement a rural and remote campaign to encourage MLTs living in urban centers to consider relocating.
3. The MLPAO will encourage employers to look at incentivizing MLT's willing to relocate.

**Long Term Action Required**

1. Request that the MTCU (Ministry of Colleges, Training and Universities) declare that seats in MLT programs across Ontario are a priority. (Cambrian College – Sudbury, St. Lawrence College - Kingston, St. Clair College – Windsor, OTU – Oshawa, Michener – Toronto)
2. The MLPAO will work with each MLT program in Ontario to promote the need for more seats.
3. Request that the Ministry of Health look at increasing funding for clinical placements in hospitals to support the increase in program seats.
4. Consider the implementation of CLXTs – Combined Lab and X-ray Technicians in rural and remote communities to address the impending shortages.

MLTs are an integral part of the healthcare team, and the MLPAO is eager to work with provincial leaders to find cost-efficient, high-ROI solutions to this health human resource issue before it hits a crisis point. These solutions would support the government's current initiative to streamline the Ontario Health System and improve front-line patient care for all Ontarians.



The Medical Laboratory Professionals' Association of Ontario (MLPAO) is the provincial organization for medical laboratory technologists and medical laboratory assistant/technicians. Incorporated in 1963, it represents over 3,000 lab professionals across Ontario. They serve in urban, rural and remote settings in the public and private sectors. Hospitals, physicians' offices, diagnostic labs, clinics, specimen collection sites and blood centers all require the services of these professionals.

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