



June 15, 2026

Health Coalition Issues Open Letter to Health Minister to Stop Transfer of Lab Testing by Quest/Lifelabs to U.S.

Hon. Sylvia Jones
Minister of Health
5th Floor
777 Bay St.,
Toronto, ON M7A 2J3

By email: sylvia.jones@ontario.ca

Dear Minister Jones,

We are writing to ask that you stop LifeLabs/Quest from sending Ontario patients laboratory specimens to Quest's reference laboratories in the United States and restore our public hospital outpatient laboratories. As you know, in August 2024, Quest completed its acquisition of LifeLabs. Since then, Quest, an American multinational, has been attempting to cut back services to Ontario's patients. In Sudbury, they attempted to close their laboratory processing facility entirely and have now reduced its staffing by half. From January to March, they cancelled afternoon hours at the Kenora lab collection centre. Currently, they are beginning to move lab tests that are done in Ontario's hospitals to the United States.

For decades, these reference laboratory tests have been performed in Ontario's hospitals. Shifting them to the United States raises serious patient privacy and specimen quality concerns, delays results, harms the efficiency and independence of Ontario's medical laboratory system, transfers more Ontario health care dollars to the United States and reduces income to our hospitals.

On March 9, 2026, LifeLabs/Quest informed "external laboratories" that reference laboratory tests will be transitioned to Quest Diagnostics. What they call "external laboratories" are Ontario's public hospital medical laboratories that have been routinely used for many years by LifeLabs to test samples from Ontario patients that LifeLabs did not have the ability to process. Quest's reference laboratories are all in the United States. Quest's March 9 memo states that phase one of this transfer of tests to the United States will begin on April 6 with phases two and three following in the period May to July of this year.

Quest's actions will:

- reduce the protection of Ontario patients' medical data;
- take financial resources away from hospitals;
- make Ontario's medical laboratory processing system less efficient by removing needed volume;
- send more Ontario tax dollars to the United States, and;
- jeopardize sample quality by increasing transportation and turnaround time and by making it harder for Ontario hospital patients to access needed reference tests.

In our view, these actions by Quest demonstrate a lack of concern about delivering high quality medical laboratory services in Ontario. Maximizing corporate income by bleeding income from Ontario's health care

system and patients should not be the driving force of our medical laboratory system. Quest's contract to provide outpatient medical laboratory services in Ontario must be cancelled as soon as possible and your government must restore all outpatient lab testing to the control of local public hospitals.

Transferring the community laboratory work to the hospitals will make a more integrated health system and ensure public – and Canadian domestic -- control over these vital services. It will be cheaper, provide better quality and faster care, strengthen the services within the local hospitals and increase accessibility for patients to needed health services.

Please provide us (and the public) with all contracts between the Ontario government and Quest/LifeLabs.

A link to a copy of Quest's March 9, 2026 memo "Changes to Referred-out Testing – Phase 1 of 3" can be found [here](#).

Regards,

(original signed)

Ross Sutherland
Chair

Natalie Mehra
Executive Director