

February 2, 2026

Honourable Sylvia Jones
Minister of Health
5th Floor, 777 Bay St.
Toronto, ON M7A 2J3
By email: sylvia.jones@ontario.ca

Dear Minister,

The Ontario Health Coalition is very concerned about the closure of the Lifelabs (Quest Diagnostics) laboratory in Sudbury. The closure of this facility will harm health care for residents in the near-North. It will increase turnaround times for needed laboratory tests. It will remove valuable expertise from the near-North health care system and it will impact the economy of Sudbury and surrounding communities, while enriching an already-lucrative American based corporation.

Last year, Quest Diagnostics -- which projected net revenues of close to \$11 billion in 2025 -- purchased Lifelabs. With this purchase, a further 61% of Ontario's community laboratory testing is now under foreign control. Almost immediately, Quest plans to close the Sudbury facility. Laboratory testing is a necessary service to rural and northern Ontario. Whether or not it is not as lucrative as providing the services in large urban centres in Southern Ontario is irrelevant. Northern communities are important to our province and the people who live there deserve equity and high-quality health care. Moreover, the public is paying for the tests whether or not Lifelabs/Quest closes down local laboratories, meaning we are paying for the service whether or not we are getting it locally.

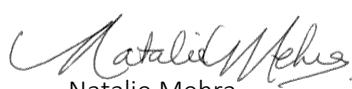
If Lifelabs (Quest) is not prepared to provide that service then the public hospital system should be provided with funding to take over specimen collection and analysis of community laboratory work in the near-North. Hospitals used to provide almost all laboratory services, including in rural and Northern communities. It is now time to return that work to the public health care system.

Transferring the community lab work to the hospitals will restore a more integrated health system. It will be cheaper for the government, provide better quality care, strengthen the services within the local hospitals, and maintain valuable skilled jobs in the North.

Transferring community laboratory work in the near-North to the public system can be achieved by exercising the "termination without cause" clause in Lifelabs transfer agreement. A second-best solution would be to give notice to Quest that their Lifelabs transfer agreement will not be renewed in three years. The Ontario government could then enter into negotiations with Lifelabs (Quest), like the Alberta government did with Dynalife, to acquire the needed facilities and transfer their operations to the local hospitals.

Thank you for your attention to these matters. We look forward to your response.


Ross Sutherland
Chairperson


Natalie Mehra
Executive Director