# **MEDIA RELEASE:** Response to the Chief Medical Officer of Health Flu Season Statement

**HAMILTON ON (January 2023):** “We applaud the Ontario government for recognizing the efforts of Ontarians in keeping the rates of infection down this flu and RSV season. Our healthcare system has weathered a long storm over the past 3 years working through COVID-19 then the early arrival of flu season and then RSV in 2022. We would like to extend this recognition to lab professionals who process each test that is conducted in Ontario. **Timely results help save lives and prevent the spread of viruses and disease**.

Over these past several years testing has been the lynchpin for decisions. Whether it was reopening the economy or making decisions to introduce rapid tests at the border, laboratory testing was what the government and public relied on. 70% of labs were severely understaffed going into this pandemic[[1]](#footnote-1) and after performing 26+ million COVID-19 tests on top of 280+ million other tests (annually), it’s understandable that 90% of medical laboratory professionals are experiencing burnout. [[2]](#footnote-2)

Our lab professionals have been part of a reliable core of health care workers that sacrificed and persevered through these difficult times, understaffed. We continue to inform the government that health human resource discussions must always include the laboratory to ensure that the right number of people are employed to service the growing 15M Ontarians that need testing. Without labs, we will be lost.

The announcement of the [Learn and Stay](https://www.ontario.ca/page/ontario-learn-and-stay-grant?gclid=CjwKCAiA5sieBhBnEiwAR9oh2smdPGrz30tMc21KDMZdQdogTmHgPpTFGjG-eRhyGYpIdW8yvUa1gBoCxiIQAvD_BwE&gclsrc=aw.ds) grant is one part of the larger solution. We look forward to ongoing funding and solutions to ensure our labs are properly staffed and patient care is not impacted.

To learn more read our [Call to Action](https://www.mlpao.org/_files/ugd/2bfe16_c0ce519573ca4fdebb975bb7609f9ca0.pdf).”

*- Michelle Hoad, CEO, Medical Laboratory Professionals’ Association of Ontario.*

1. [Based on a survey](https://www.mlpao.org/_files/ugd/691355_870e5fae53f34d0cba723820bac97c13.pdf) of lab leaders and professionals in Spring 2021. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. [Based on a survey](https://www.mlpao.org/_files/ugd/691355_870e5fae53f34d0cba723820bac97c13.pdf) of lab leaders and professionals in Spring 2021. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)