

October 2, 2019

Honourable Minister:

We are reaching out to you today to discuss recommendations out of the Report and Recommendations: Blue Ribbon Panel on Alberta's Finances (released on September 3, 2019), and pose solutions regarding health care and provision of these services.

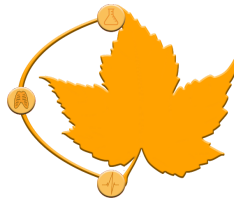
This report highlights the need to look at sustainable and fiscally responsible healthcare. As outlined on page 27-28 in the report, our current system contains cost-effective health professionals that are underutilized in the province of Alberta. An example of such a role is the Combined Laboratory and X-ray Technologist (CLXT). This profession, which is self-regulated in Alberta, was created to provide equitable, cost-effective diagnostic services to the public in rural and suburban communities.

It is not known by most, but CLXTs are trained to provide diagnostic imaging, laboratory and electrocardiography in health care facilities/hospitals that have upwards of 80-100 beds, as well as urgent care facilities. This profession is an integral part of the rural health delivery landscape in Alberta, providing these diagnostic services which allow all health care team members, such as physicians and nurses, to make informed and accurate care plans. This blend of skills and competencies creates opportunities to reduce the number of employees required for staffing diagnostic imaging and medical laboratory departments in suburban/rural sites, resulting in significant cost savings of public dollars.

With the current fiscal considerations in healthcare, the employment of more CLXTs in rural hospitals/health care centres and suburban urgent care centres would be a viable and responsible solution. For example, a typical daytime shift in a rural diagnostic department would require two Medical Laboratory Technologists (MLT) and two Medical Radiography Technologists (MRT). This number of required employees could be reduced to two or three CLXTs, while still providing equitable, competent diagnostic services.

Examples of savings include:

1. Employing three (3) CLXTs vs four (4) MLT/MRTs (based on an average hourly wage of \$35/hour) would be an annual savings to the public of \$70000. If this shift were to occur with just 20 positions in the province, it would be an annual savings of 1.4 million dollars.
2. With respect to callbacks after regular working hours, often a single CLXT, can be on call in place of an MLT and MRT (2 staff). This would result in a savings of \$210 per callback. As there are regularly multiple callbacks after hours in hospitals across the province, this could be significant cost savings.



Canadian Society of
Combined Laboratory and
X-Ray Technologists

Concerning Health Services Recommendation one (1):

1. There are 573 licensed CLXTs currently registered in Alberta. Of those registered, many are underutilized in their current employment situations, only working in one diagnostic aspect of the profession, or in a limited capacity within in one or all areas of competency.
2. There is a total of 97 health facilities across Alberta with less than 80 beds (in-patient and urgent care) which are the typical size of a facility suitable to employ CLXTs. 74% of these facilities could be staffed solely by CLXTs based on the number of beds and services provided (Data source Alberta Health Services).
3. The remaining 26% of facilities would require CLXTs to receive specialized training in CT and/or Transfusion Medicine, which the regulatory body is already working on advanced training.
4. Recruitment and retention in rural areas of Alberta can be difficult to maintain. Most CLXTs originate from a rural background, become trained and licensed with the intent of returning to work in a rural setting. It is in these rural communities and small cities where a CLXT can utilize the skills listed in the CLXT competency profile. A CLXT who has the opportunity to work in a community, utilizing their full scope of practice, results in greater employee retention and satisfaction. Therefore, resulting in long term, high quality and consistent services for the public.

We would like to request the opportunity to meet with you, at your convenience, to provide detailed information on what the members of our society do and how diagnostics can be provided more efficiently, sustainably and cost-effectively to rural Albertans

Regards,

Canadian Society of Combined Laboratory and X-Ray Technologists