

October 19, 2020

Dear Premier Pallister,

I am writing today regarding a critically urgent matter. Cadham Provincial Laboratory, our flagship provincial medical lab, is under extreme pressure – Medical Lab Technologists (MLTs) are at their breaking point and more staff must be hired as soon as possible.

When the pandemic hit, Cadham Lab employees stepped up to the challenge, processing thousands of samples, working tremendous amounts of overtime, at a pace they have never seen before. I'm told that right now, they are working at about three hundred percent of their normal capacity. This includes not just COVID-19 testing, but also testing required for our health care system to continue serving the broader medical needs of Manitobans.

Recently, a group of employees from Cadham Lab sent a letter to the Assistant Deputy Minister of Health, outlining urgent needs on the front-lines. In particular, they explained why they need relief in the form of more Medical Lab Technologists (MLT) to process COVID 19 samples. During the summer, students pitched in at the lab, which I'm told was of some assistance, but a more effective and sustainable solution is to bring on additional trained MLTs.

Since the onset of this pandemic, the province has focused on expanding private testing, rather than expanding capacity at Cadham Lab. By investing in additional staff, Cadham Lab can quickly meet the growing pressure on our lab testing capacity.

The [Winnipeg Free Press](#) recently reported that lab capacity, including private capacity, is approaching its limit. As COVID-19 testing ramps up, with additional sample collection sites, hiring more MLT's at Cadham Lab will add much-needed capacity during the second wave of this pandemic. Adding staff is also necessary to prevent staff burnout and ensure a thriving lab team into the coming months and years.

The dedicated staff at Cadham Lab want to do what they do best – accurately and efficiently diagnose illness and keep Manitobans safe. They are relying on your government's immediate attention to this urgent matter.

Sincerely,

Michelle Gawronsky