

DATE:	17 January 2023
TO:	Swan Hills Healthcare Centre - Physicians, Nursing and Laboratory Staff
FROM:	North Zone - Alberta Precision Laboratories
RE:	Temporary Change to Hours of Outpatient Collections/Diagnostic Imaging at Swan Hills Healthcare Centre

PLEASE POST OR DISTRIBUTE AS WIDELY AS APPROPRIATE

Key Message

- Beginning January 23, 2023, there will be no laboratory testing or Diagnostic Imaging (DI) at the Swan Hills Healthcare Centre due to two Combined Laboratory and X-ray Technologist (CLXT) vacancies. Blood collections and specimen transportation will be available Monday to Friday, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Limited on-site point of care testing will remain available for nursing staff to perform when necessary.
- DI services and transfusion of blood products will not be available until a CLXT can be recruited.
- Nearest available lab and x-ray services are located in Whitecourt, Barrhead or Slave Lake between the hours of 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday to Friday (excluding holidays).

Background information

- There is currently a province-wide shortage of laboratory staff. While Alberta Precision Laboratories (APL) has been working diligently to prevent service disruptions, ongoing recruitment efforts in Swan Hills have been unsuccessful. Due to a CLXT vacancy, the Swan Hills Healthcare Centre will be temporarily discontinuing on-site laboratory testing and diagnostic imaging, effective **January 23, 2023**.
- Beginning **January 23, 2023**, a Medical Laboratory Assistant (MLA) will be available during regular business hours to enable blood collections and transportation of samples to other testing facilities. Receiving and issuing of blood products is not done by MLA's, so transfusion of blood products will be discontinued at this site until a CLXT can be found.
- Recruitment activities are ongoing and this service disruption will be re-evaluated should CLXT staffing become available.
- On-site point of care testing by nursing staff remains available throughout this service disruption.

How this will impact you

- New laboratory service availability:
 - Outpatient blood collection hours (effective January 23, 2023):
 - Monday to Friday: 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.
 - Saturday, Sunday and Holidays: CLOSED
 - On-call services will be unavailable, effective January 23, 2023
- Laboratory testing will be sent off-site and turnaround times will be longer for tests previously performed locally.



Action Required

- These changes are effective January 23, 2023. Please update all laboratory lists you have to reflect these changes.

Questions/Concerns

- Karen Bland, Manager, Rural North Zone, West, Karen.Bland@aplabs.ca
- Dr. Kaila Crawford, North Sector Associate Medical Director (Rural)
- North Zone POCT Department, POCT.North@aplabs.ca

Approved by

- Dr. Kaila Crawford, North Sector Associate Medical Director (Rural), APL
- Dr. Anna Fuezery, North Sector POCT Medical Lead, APL