

DATE:	2022 February 28
TO:	Medicine Hat and Area Physicians
FROM:	Alberta Precision Laboratories, South Sector Leadership
RE:	Temporary Change to Medicine Hat Community Laboratory Service Hours

PLEASE POST OR DISTRIBUTE AS WIDELY AS APPROPRIATE

Key Message

- Effective Tuesday, March 1, 2022 hours of operation for community laboratory service at the Alberta Precision Laboratories (APL) patient service centre in Medicine Hat will be temporarily reduced by two hours during weekdays due to staffing shortages.
- Until further notice, the APL patient service centre at 44 Carry Drive SE will be open Monday to Friday from 7 a.m. to 5 p.m. Hours on Saturdays will remain 8:15 a.m. to 4 p.m.
- Patients with existing appointments outside of the new hours are being contacted to have their appointments re-booked.
- For more information about lab service hours and locations, and to book appointments for lab work, patients can visit APL's online booking system at www.APLappointments.ca or by calling the province-wide appointment line at 1-833-572-0577.
- The outpatient lab at Medicine Hat Regional Hospital remains closed to the public, and appointments at the hospital lab are available by physician referral only.
- All patients are required to complete entry screening, wear masks and follow physical distancing requirements when visiting the lab in order to safeguard the health of patients and healthcare staff.

Why this is important

- This change is being made as part of APL's ongoing efforts to continue providing safe, high-quality lab services for all Albertans as we continue to address the staffing challenges experienced in many areas of the healthcare system.

Action Required

- Please inform your patients about the change in hours of operation and encourage them to plan and book appointments for lab service as much as possible.
- Physicians are also requested to limit all non-essential lab testing and delay non-urgent blood testing when possible due to a [temporary shortage](#) of disposable vials used to collect the most common blood test samples across the province. See Feb. 16 lab bulletin for more information: <https://www.albertahealthservices.ca/assets/wf/lab/if-lab-hp-bulletin-blood-tube-shortage-k2-edta-lavander-top-affecting-cbc-hemoglobin-a1c-and-type-and-screen-availability.pdf>
- Consult Choosing Wisely Canada's recommendations for limiting unnecessary testing and conserving lab resources during the global blood tube shortage: <https://choosingwiselycanada.org/perspective/global-shortages/>

Inquiries and feedback may be directed to

- Madisen Longley, Laboratory Manager, Medicine Hat Regional Hospital Madisen.Longley@aplabs.ca

This bulletin has been reviewed and approved by

- Dr. Spencer Paulson, Regional Laboratory Medicine Site Chief, Medicine Hat Regional Hospital Spencer.Paulson@aplabs.ca