



Canadian Society for Medical Laboratory Science
Société canadienne de science de laboratoire médical

Pandemic and a Profession

Christine Nielsen, CSMLS CEO



csmls.org
scslm.org



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Land Acknowledgement

We respectfully acknowledge the CSMLS office, located in Hamilton Ontario, is situated upon the traditional territories of the Haudenosaunee Confederacy, the Mississauga Nation, Anishinaabe People, and the Neutral People. This land is covered by the Dish With One Spoon Wampum, which is a treaty between the Haudenosaunee and Anishinaabe to share and care for the resources around the Great Lakes.

A photograph of two scientists, a man and a woman, in a laboratory setting. The man, wearing a white lab coat and blue gloves, is holding a small round-bottom flask containing a yellow liquid. The woman, also in a white lab coat and wearing safety glasses, is holding a spiral-bound notebook and looking at the flask. In the background, there is a computer monitor, a rack of test tubes, and other laboratory equipment. The text "You know who we are... and during the pandemic, all of Canada does, too..." is overlaid in blue.

**You know who we are...
and during the pandemic,
all of Canada does, too...**

COVID 19: March 2020

- ❑ Personnel shortage **BEFORE** pandemic
- ❑ Education and clinical placements – new models needed
- ❑ Accreditation, educators, associations, regulators – finding new normal

Burden to Lab

- ❑ March 2020 – **no COVID testing** – PCR gold standard, method validation needed
- ❑ Summer 2020 – some labs doing 15,000/d
- ❑ Some allow students on site for **placement**
- ❑ Full programs in MLA denied access for months
- ❑ Personnel shortage BEFORE pandemic

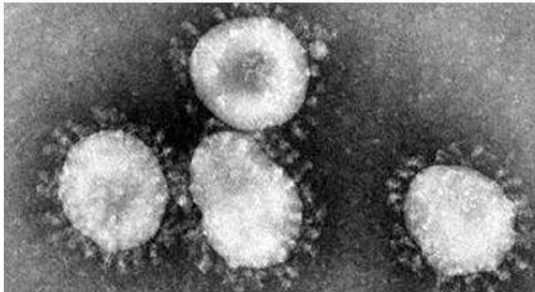


Solutions by CSMLS: Personnel

- Education – PHAC info sessions
- COVID resources online
- Advocate for pandemic pay (denied)
- In-person learning moves to virtual
 - **Regulators confirm – standards will not wane for CPD just because we are in a pandemic**

COVID Response

COVID-19: Member Support



credit: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Coronavirus>

The recent developments of the 2019 Novel Coronavirus, first reported in China, are quickly becoming a worldwide news story. We've pulled together some reliable resources to help inform and guide CSMLS members on this health care issue.

Reliable Resources

Take Care of Yourself

Advocacy & Media



Managing Tumultuous Thoughts in an Overwhelming Time


February 25th, 2021 12pm-1pm EST
Presenter: Rosina Mete, MSc, RP, PhD

COVID-19 Member Support Page

- Total Page visits since launch till now - **4,885**
- Visits in 2021 till now - 1,394
- Average time spent on a page - **02:46** (min:sec)



Solutions by CSMLS: Personnel

- Mental Health Check with Members + supports
- Budget requests – Provinces to increase enrolment, clinical placement funding, simulation
- Project participation
 - **CICAN Virtu-WIL**
 - **CSMLS WIL (IEMLT)**
 - **MLA**  **MLT Laddering**

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Planning Strategic Direction

- Completed during the pandemic

Advocate for solutions to address HHR challenge in the medical laboratory field



Solutions by CSMLS: Personnel

- **Support** to Others – Michener, OnTechU, U of A, BCIT, Anderson College, Conestoga (data), Oulton College (new prg)
- **Exams** ramp up - increased MLA and MLT exam dates, new format (remote proctoring)

Other Supports

- **Media and PR** – who we are, what we do, gentle critique of government (member expectations)
- **Government Relations** – BC, MB, NU, ON, AB, NB, NS



Justin Trudeau ✓
@JustinTrudeau

To all of our incredible medical laboratory professionals: thank you. You work hard around the clock, and behind the scenes, to support our health care system and protect our health - and we are so grateful. Learn more about these unsung heroes and the [#IndigoLabCoat](#) here [↪](#)



Dr. Theresa Tam ✓ @CPHO_Canada · Oct 27

Great idea from @csmls to bring awareness of the essential work of medical lab professionals. The [#IndigoLabCoat](#) is printed in microscopic indigo type with the names of the lab tests performed 1.2 million times each day in Canada. Take a closer look at [indigolabcoat.ca](#)



8:27 PM · Nov 14, 2020 · Twitter for iPhone

466 Retweets 101 Quote Tweets 3.6K Likes





Hayley Wickenheiser
@wick_22

I'm proud to show off the first ever
[#IndigoLabCoatofHonour](#).
Designed with [@CSMLS](#) to honour all the Canadian
Medical Laboratory Professionals who work tirelessly to
keep us healthy!
Learn more about it at [indigolabcoat.ca](#)



Indigo Lab Coat of Honour Key Campaign Results

social media posts
seen more than **221.5K** times

10 transit shelter ads seen
more than **6.9M** times

3 YouTube videos
seen more than **180K** times

1 exhibit displayed at
2 locations for **17** days

Other Supports

- **MLA Regulation** – improve HHR with qualified, rostered, regulated health professionals to supplement MLTs
- **Creation of Boundaries of Simulation** – competency sign off for students (with Equal) (placements - 17-40 weeks across Canada)

Solutions by CSMLS: Demand for Testing



- Continue the conversation with members, **Choosing Wisely Canada**
- New CWC **Steering Committee** (with physicians and hospital administrators)
- Share **success** stories, promote adoption

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Mental Health – 2021 Survey

- 1,366 responses, 2.5% MoE at a 95% CI
- Diverse cross section of our organization
- Employment prospects remain good
 - **89% MLA employment rate**
 - **95% MLT employment rate**
- Job security has improved
- **14% increase in emotional exhaustion**, after a 3% increase between 2016 and 2018
- **Depression and anxiety** - risen since 2016

Mental Health Tool Kit

- Total page visits in 2020; 78,101
- Took off during the initial months of pandemic)
- Most viewed page:
<https://mentalhealth.csmls.org/i-am-a-student/>
- Visits in 2021; 14,871
- Average time spent on a page
4:58 (min:sec)



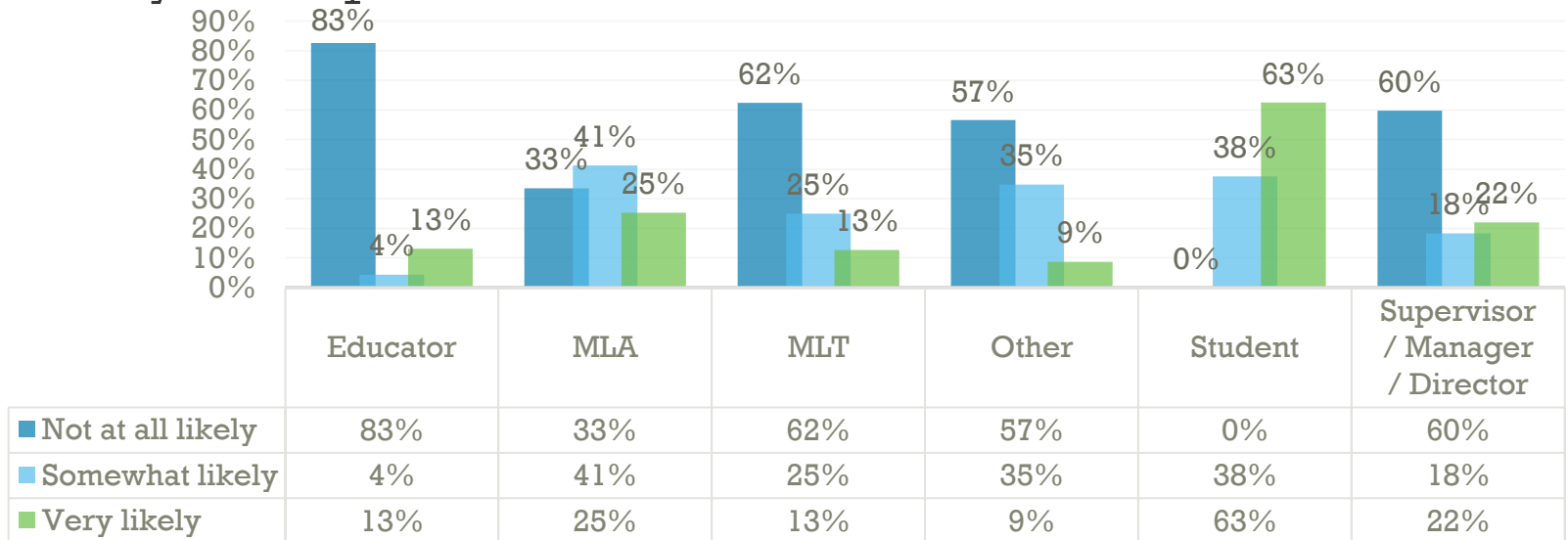
**ARE YOU
MENTALLY
HEALTHY?**

By the time Canadians reach 40 years of age, 1 in 2 have—or have had—a mental illness. CSMLS has compiled a Mental Health Toolkit that empowers employees, employers, and organizations to take charge and make positive change within the medical laboratory profession.

✓ TAKE CHARGE OF YOUR LIFE

Mental Health

- 42% indicate they will make a genuine effort to **find a new job** with another employer within the next year; up from 34% in 2018.



Mental Health: Next Steps

- Peer support **pilot program**
- Update and promote our MH toolkit
 - **Pandemic-specific resources + mini survey**
- Sharing of information
 - **Webinars and presentations to specific groups** (regulators, associations, deans, other health care organizations and provincial institutions)
 - **Peer reviewed publication of our findings**
 - **Joint publication with partners**

Questions?

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Mental Health Toolkit <https://mentalhealth.csmls.org/>

