

Position Statement

Accreditation of Medical Laboratories

It is the CSMLS’ position that independent, third-party medical laboratory accreditation, and the subsequent public disclosure of accreditation results, demonstrates a high quality of patient-care by the medical laboratory and helps to ensure safe laboratory testing for all Canadians.

Third-party accreditation is a “procedure by which an authoritative body gives formal recognition that an organization is competent to carry out specific tasks (modified from ISO/TEC17000).”¹ Accreditation ensures that these particular tasks (detailed in the scope of the accreditation) are carried out “in a reliable, credible, and accurate manner.”² It “is the evaluation of processes to ensure quality and competence”³ and provides laboratories with independent, third-party assessments, using standards built upon validated best practices.⁴ Accreditation is “the longest established and most widely known process for the external evaluation of health-care services . . . and also provides recognition that the service is meeting provincial standards of quality”.⁵

According to the International Laboratory Accreditation Cooperation (ILAC), “Laboratory accreditation provides formal recognition to competent laboratories . . . [it] benefits laboratories by allowing them to determine whether they are performing their work correctly and to appropriate standards, and provides them with a benchmark for maintaining that competence. . . A regular assessment by an accreditation body checks all aspects of a facility’s operations related to consistently producing accurate and dependable data. Areas for improvement are identified and discussed, and a detailed report provided at the end of each visit. Where necessary, follow-up action is monitored by the accreditation body so the facility is confident that it has taken the appropriate corrective action”.⁶

The benefits of achieving accreditation include:

- Standardized processes that allow for improved laboratory services
- Established tools that ensure best practices and high-quality diagnostic testing
- Recognized compliance with rigorous national and international performance standards
- Minimized waste and improved efficiency
- Improved risk management and patient safety
- Increased safety for all laboratory employees

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Laboratory accreditation is available through many third-party organizations, including, but not limited to: The Institute for Quality Management in Healthcare (IQMH), Accreditation Canada (AC), the College of American Pathologists (CAP), the Diagnostic Accreditation Program (DAP), etc.

References:

¹ CLSI guideline GP26-A4_Quality Management System- A Model for Laboratory Services Approved Guideline, May 21, 2015

² <https://iqmh.org/Proficiency-Testing/Centre-for-Accreditation>

³ <https://iqmh.org/Services/Centre-For-Accreditation/Accreditation-Overview>

⁴ <https://accreditation.ca/accreditation/What-is-Accreditation>

⁵ <https://www.cpsbc.ca/accredited-facilities/dap>

⁶ <http://ilac.org>; ILAC B4:11/2015 “The Advantages of Being an Accredited Laboratory”