



# Guy Bourgouin

MPP, Mushkegowuk - James Bay | Député, Mushkegowuk - Baie James

Kapuskasing, August 7, 2020

Hon. Christine Elliott,  
Minister of Health  
5th Floor, 777 Bay St.  
Toronto, ON M7A 2J3

## **RE: Pandemic Pay for Hospital Laboratory Staff**

Minister Elliott,

I am writing to you today to share the concerns of frontline laboratory staff at Sensenbrenner Hospital in Kapuskasing. While working in settings and under conditions that coincide with the pandemic pay definition offered by your [Ministry](#) – the Temporary Pandemic Pay is “a targeted program designed to support employees who work in congregate care settings or primarily with vulnerable populations, where maintaining physical distancing is difficult or not possible” – hospital diagnostic staff are still ineligible for a top-up they have worked for and fully and truly deserve.

Laboratory staff had been working tirelessly prior to the March 2020 Emergency Declaration and have doubled their efforts ever since. Since March of this year, they have extended work hours from eight to twelve hours a day to provide diagnostic services 24 hours a day; incorporated night shifts; cancelled scheduled vacations; and halted routine operations to accommodate pandemic efforts. And they do so in care settings where physical distancing is arguably a challenge.

By the same token, while work designations do not require laboratory technicians to attend to public-facing tasks, they nonetheless enter requisitions, collect blood samples, perform ECGs on inpatients, porter patients and blood products around hospital, and receive and ship COVID swabs.

Laboratory technicians offer an essential service in an at-risk care setting and perform public-facing tasks that are critical for the many roles required for a sound pandemic strategy. They, like all workers who have diligently and tirelessly put public health before any individual goal, deserve to be called “health care heroes” and thereby be remunerated as such.

I am thus asking you to reconsider the current criteria and to include hospital laboratory technicians to the list of health care workers eligible for pandemic pay. I anxiously await your response.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Guy Bourgouin".

Guy Bourgouin  
MPP / député, Mushkegowuk-James Bay

Cc: MPP / députée France Gélinas, Official Opposition Critic for Health