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## **National Medical Laboratory Week, April 19 - 25, 2009**

Tanya Kilborn of Kamloops, BC, President of the British Columbia Society of Laboratory Science [BCSLS] announced today that the Society will be celebrating National Medical Laboratory Week across British Columbia from April 19-25, 2009.

National Medical Laboratory Week [NMLW] is celebrated throughout Canada in conjunction with the Canadian Society for Medical Laboratory Science [CSMLS] headquartered in Hamilton, Ontario. It is intended to recognize and promote the profession of Medical Laboratory Technology in Canada and it highlights the accomplishments of thousands of Medical Laboratory Technologists and Assistants who work in hospitals and private laboratory facilities in each and every province and territory.

According to Kilborn, " tests performed by medical laboratory professionals provide vital information about your health. Doctors depend on laboratory test results to accurately diagnose and treat illness, and monitor patient response and progress. In fact, up to 85 per cent of decisions about diagnosis and treatment are based on laboratory test results. The patient and their health care providers must always have confidence in the accuracy of these test results. As medical laboratory professionals, we remain committed to our number one priority—ensuring patient safety through accurate medical laboratory testing."

Laboratory tests are only performed in Canada by certified medical laboratory professionals. The Canadian Society for Medical Laboratory Science (CSMLS) certifies medical laboratory technologists [MLTs] and the BCSLS certifies medical laboratory assistants [MLAs]. Certification ensures that the person who performs laboratory tests has the necessary knowledge, skills and expertise to produce accurate results.

Malcolm Ashford, Executive Director of the BCSLS, added "the timing of National Medical Laboratory Week is particularly notable this year as it falls on the heels of the Cameron Commission of Inquiry Report out of Newfoundland about incorrect laboratory test results affecting breast cancer patients. Public sentiment about laboratory test results has been tainted somewhat as a result of this tragedy. We as professionals need to restore that faith and assure the public that indeed they can count on accurate results when they visit their hospital or private medical laboratory. That is why the BCSLS has been an active proponent of a Regulatory College here in BC and why we will continue to advocate for a College until the BC government responds positively, in the public interest."

Kilborn also stated, "there has never been a more exciting time to be working in the field of medical laboratory science. Career opportunities abound and the profession's contributions to the health care system are better understood and appreciated by key decision makers especially in government. At the same time, the medical laboratory profession is facing a serious human resource shortage. We need to encourage young people to pursue careers in medical laboratory science. This is also one of the goals of National Medical Laboratory Week and our BCSLS members will be out and about in communities around the province talking about this exciting career opportunity."

The BCSLS is a Professional Organization representing over 1,100 medical laboratory technologists and 300 medical laboratory assistants in British Columbia. The purpose of the Society is "to protect and further the professional identity and interests of MLTs and MLAs in BC."

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