



Trail Health Centre Transition to LifeLabs Questions and Answers

1. Why are lab services in Trail changing?

Due to increased demand for lab services and staffing challenges during the COVID-19 pandemic, Interior Health requested additional capacity for lab services under the contract held with LifeLabs. The LifeLabs Trail Patient Service Centre was established to ensure that the Trail Health Centre staff could be redeployed during periods of staff shortages to support the delivery of laboratory services within the Kootenay Boundary Hospital. More recently, however, Trail does not have the patient volumes to support having two community collection labs. This change is necessary as part of our efforts to optimize collection services, reduce duplication of services, lower costs and utilize human resources more effectively and efficiently to meet the needs across the health region.

2. Will Interior Health and LifeLabs consult with the community on this change?

Yes. Since Interior Health announced changes to the downtown Trail Health Centre Laboratory Services on June 13th, we have heard additional feedback from members of the community requesting further consideration and engagement.

Interior Health appreciates the need to support accessible lab services, particularly for those with transportation and mobility challenges and will take additional time to engage directly with partners including medical staff, municipal leaders, patients, and others to identify further options to address these concerns.

3. Is LifeLabs going to move into the Trail Health Centre space?

At this time, plans are in place to provide community lab services at the LifeLabs Waneta Mall location. Patient volumes and wait times will be monitored and services adjusted as volumes increase to accommodate need.

These plans to change lab services are still needed to make the best use of limited laboratory staffing resources in Trail. However, we are looking at alternative solutions to support access to laboratory services in the community. These discussions are underway and we will provide an update as soon as possible.

4. Are IH staff losing their jobs?

No, Interior Health (IH) lab staff who currently work at the health centre will move to the hospital to support patients there. All staff will continue to have jobs with IH.

5. Why are we being told to go to LifeLabs when it is an American company?

LifeLabs has been operating in B.C. for more than 60 years. LifeLabs must comply with all B.C. and Canadian regulations related to specimen collection and protecting the privacy of patients' personal information.

LifeLabs was founded in B.C. and employs British Columbians. When LifeLabs was sold to Quest, a U.S. corporation, in 2024, it came with stipulations, including that LifeLabs would retain its brand and that the headquarters and management would remain in Canada.

6. What has been done to protect confidentiality of records?

LifeLabs is legally obligated to comply with Canadian laws. It remains subject to Freedom of Information and the Protection of Privacy Act and provides no personal data to Quest. This ensures that all personal health information remains safeguarded under Canadian jurisdiction.

7. How is LifeLabs going to be able to handle all the patients now that the Trail Health Centre is closing?

LifeLabs has supported local patients since November 2023 and has the capacity to accommodate patients who currently go to the health centre downtown. IH will continue to monitor wait times and turnaround times for results and work with LifeLabs to adjust services as needed.

8. What is the location and the service hours for LifeLabs and is the location accessible for patients with disabilities?

LifeLabs is located at Waneta Plaza on the second floor adjacent to a primary care centre. An elevator is available to accommodate accessibility. Hours of operation are Monday to Friday 7 a.m. to 3 p.m.

9. Does LifeLabs perform cardiology services such as ECGs?

Yes, LifeLabs offers ECG, Holter Monitoring, and Ambulatory Blood Pressure Monitoring service at the Trail facility. Patients are welcome to schedule an appointment. More information can be found at lifelabs.com.

10. Can I schedule an online appointment with LifeLabs?

Yes, patients are encouraged to register for the MyCareCompass portal where patients can schedule their own appointment online and see their lab test results. Patients can also call LifeLabs at 1-800-431-7206 to book an appointment. IH will have a LifeLabs customer support specialist available on-site at the Trail Health Centre to assist patients with registration and scheduling their next appointment beginning June 23, 2025.

11. Will my test results show up on the Interior Health myhealth portal?

Interior Health would like to recognize and acknowledge the traditional, ancestral, and unceded territories of the Dākelh Dené, Ktunaxa, Nlaka'pamux, Secwépemc, St'át'imc, Syilx, and Tšilhqot'in Nations where we live, learn, collaborate and work together.

Patient results performed by any service provider outside of IH do not show up on the myhealth portal for patient viewing. For patients who use LifeLabs, lab test results are available on the MyCareCompass portal: mycarecompass.lifelabs.com or on BC's Health Gateway healthgateway.gov.bc.ca.

12. Do I need to schedule an appointment or can I walk-in to the LifeLabs location if I need a blood test?

Yes, LifeLabs welcomes walk-in patients. Patients do not need to schedule an appointment, although scheduling an appointment is recommended for your convenience and to help reduce wait times.

13. Is my physician aware of this change to an alternate service provider?

Yes, primary care physicians were notified and communication pathways for feedback from physicians have been set up. During this period of transition, IH Medical Lab Leads will be connecting through medical peer groups to offer assurance.

14. Is my physician going to know where to fax my lab order?

Physicians have been provided guidance on how and where to fax patient requisitions. Patients are still welcome to present with a hard-copy requisition if it is more convenient.

15. Will my standing orders be sent from Trail Health Centre to LifeLabs?

Interior Health will be providing standing orders directly to LifeLabs where available. If a valid standing order is not available when a patient presents to LifeLabs, IH will forward the order at the time of the visit. Alternatively, physicians can fax or email any existing or new standing orders directly to LifeLabs.

16. Will my physician receive my lab results?

Yes, physicians receive laboratory results directly through an electronic notification system from any laboratory service provider in the province.

17. What happens to continuity of care? Right now, lab results are accessible across Interior Health. Will that still be true if a private lab takes over?

Your physician is able to access your results no matter where your tests are done—whether it is through LifeLabs or another lab service provider in British Columbia. Patients will need to obtain their results through LifeLabs [MyCareCompass](https://mycarecompass.lifelabs.com).

18. How long will it take for my test results to be available?

Physicians should receive reports in one to two days. This is in alignment with benchmarks for outpatient testing.

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19. Do I have to go to LifeLabs?

During this period of engagement, patients can access lab service at the Trail Health Centre or visit the LifeLabs location at Waneta mall. IH is committed to providing guidance and direction for all patients in-partnership with LifeLabs. Future changes and timeline will be shared as planning continues.

20. Can I go to the lab or schedule an appointment at the Kootenay Boundary Regional Hospital (KBRH)?

The Kootenay Boundary Hospital lab will continue to provide outpatient collection services for patients who require tests for pre-surgical screening, cancer/renal care, or for patients who require more urgent results. Please speak with your doctor to determine if obtaining outpatient collection services at KBRH is appropriate for your care and treatment. We do not anticipate an increase in the number of patients being supported through these services.

21. My doctor visit is informed by lab results that must be same day or within the past 24 hours. How can I be sure that my doctor will have my lab results prior to my doctor's appointment?

Physicians will receive lab results within one to two days for the majority of tests. Time sensitive tests such as the International Normalized Ratio (INR) and the Activated Partial Thromboplastin Time (aPTT) can be collected at LifeLabs and will be sent to Kootenay Boundary Regional Hospital for testing.

22. Where will Trail's outpatient tests be processed? Will they be sent to Vancouver or other locations?

Samples are sent to the LifeLabs Burnaby facility for analysis. IH is engaged in discussions with LifeLabs to support the timely access of test results. Testing outside the health region is not new. IH lab sends samples not-performed within the region to multiple reference labs across the province regularly, as do other health authorities.

23. Is this change related to the Beaver Valley Clinic lab closure?

The Beaver Valley Clinic is a private physician-run practice that historically provided blood collections for patients. To enable lab services to continue, the office was required to be accredited by the College of Physicians and Surgeons. Although this was not an IH clinic, we did have discussions with the clinic owners to help guide them and determine what steps they could take to meet the regulations. The clinic's decision to not continue this service was independent of IH.

24. If there is a shortage of lab professionals and what is being done to make sure we have enough staff?

Recruitment and retention of healthcare human resources is a priority across the province of BC. There is a national shortage of both Medical Laboratory Assistants and

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Medical Laboratory Technologists. IH in collaboration with the Provincial Laboratory Medicine Services (PLMS), Ministry of Health and post-secondary institutions, continue to make changes, offer sponsorships and financial incentives for all rural locations (including Trail).

25. How will this transition impact service at the Kootenay Boundary Regional Hospital?

There is a shortage of lab professionals in the province. This transition will strengthen and protect the delivery of acute services at Kootenay Boundary Regional Hospital (KBRH), while allowing LifeLabs to focus on its strength of delivering community outpatient lab services.

26. What if I am immobile and not able to leave my home to access lab services at LifeLabs?

LifeLabs will be introducing its mobile lab service to the Trail community at the end of July. Mobile lab service is where a LifeLabs employee will visit and collect a lab specimen from a patient in their home. Mobile lab services must be ordered by a healthcare provider and are available only to patients who are immobile and unable to leave their home due to a health condition.

27. What are my transport options to the Waneta Mall if I am disabled or a senior who cannot drive?

HandyDART is an accessible, door-to-door shared transit service for people with permanent or temporary disabilities that prevent them from using fixed-route transit without assistance from another person. HandyDART picks you up at your accessible door and drops you off at the accessible door of your destination.

Phone: **1-855-993-3100**

Ext. 1 for Castlegar and Trail

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