CSMLS ● SCSLM

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

Position Statement

Quality Work Life Environments for Medical Laboratory Professionals

The Canadian Society for Medical Laboratory Science (CSMLS) believes that high quality medical laboratory work life environments, also known as positive practice environments, directly impact medical laboratory professionals' job satisfaction, productivity, recruitment and retention. A quality work life environment positively influences laboratory services, encourages safe work environments in health care systems and strengthens patient care.

High quality work life environments are defined as settings that encourage health, safety and personal wellbeing. They improve motivation, increase productivity and enhance performance in both individuals and organizations, and provide support for best practices in quality patient care.

The CSMLS considers the mental health and psychological safety of medical laboratory professionals (MLPs) to be as important as other aspects of health and safety. The CSMLS has developed supports for the mental health of MLPs through the Mental Health Toolkit available at https://mentalhealth.csmls.org/. This toolkit details approaches for employees, managers and organizations to support the mental and psychological safety for medical laboratory professionals.

High quality laboratory work life environments demonstrate:

- **Effective communication and collaboration** – Quality work life environments promote effective communication and successful collaboration throughout the entire health care team
- **Responsibility and accountability** – Medical laboratory professionals are accountable to provide high quality laboratory services; they must be encouraged to participate in decision making, assist in policy development and aid in procedure implementation
- **Realistic workload and reasonable work schedules** – Quality work life environments support and facilitate safe medical laboratory practices and promote work-life balance; there must always be sufficient staffing levels and adequate time for laboratory professionals to perform competent testing and produce quality results
- **Strong leadership** – Managers/supervisors have a direct impact on work life environments. Mentors, role models, visionaries, advocates, and peer support groups who encourage, engage and empower workers play an essential role in effective leadership

- **Support for up-to-date technology** – Quality work life environments employ advanced technology to provide optimal testing, obtain relevant data, and support critical thinking
- **Occupational health, safety and wellness policies** – Quality work life environments employ policies that address workplace hazards and promote zero-tolerance against discrimination and workplace harassment and/or violence
- **Professional development –** Quality work life environments create opportunities and facilitates access to funding for employees' professional development and continuous learning; they appropriately and effectively allocate designated resources in a fair and equitable manner
- **Positive workplace cultures –** These quality work life environments promote patient and employee wellbeing, address ethical issues, support safety, promote employee recognition and ensure adequate resources

The CSMLS believes that the primary responsibility for providing quality work life environments is a shared role between employees, employers and governments, as follows:

Medical Laboratory Professionals shall**:**
- Attain and maintain competency
- Determine the full scope of individual practice
- Demonstrate leadership qualities, communicate effectively, take an active role in decision making, participate in inter-professional collaboration and provide input concerning resource allocation
- Contribute to quality work life environments through compliance with established policies, procedures, guidelines and regulations

Employers shall**:**
- Allow sufficient time to ensure that medical laboratory professionals can safely work within the scope of their individual practice
- Ensure adequate staffing to meet workload requirements
- Contribute to effective management that supports and encourages worker engagement and empowerment
- Support a culture that can sustain change
- Ensure that medical laboratory leadership is visible at all organizational levels to enable medical laboratory professionals to implement evidence-based decision making
- Promote zero-tolerance toward discrimination and workplace harassment and/or violence
- Support and encourage employee wellness programs
- Support workplace orientation, continuing education, formal education, in-service education and mentoring so that medical laboratory professionals can acquire and maintain competence
- Encourage medical laboratory professionals to shape their own professional development
- Involve medical laboratory professionals in decision making
- Enable technologies to support optimal information and knowledge management; include provision for standard operating procedures, appropriate equipment and adequate supplies

- Develop supportive employee policies and encourage effective relationships among team members

Governments shall**:**
- Collaborate with medical laboratory professionals to ensure that medical laboratory leadership is visible, accessible and credible
- Examine emerging issues, make recommendations and provide adequate funding to meet identified needs

A high-quality laboratory work life environment contributes to a better health care system, improves medical laboratory professionals' safety, health and wellbeing, and enhances patient care.

References:

Joint Position Statement - Canadian Nurses Association and Canadian Federation of Nurses Unions: *Practice Environments: Maximizing Client, Nurse and System Outcomes* http://cna-aiic.ca/~/media/cna/page-content/pdf-en/Practice-Environments-Maximizing-Outcomes-for-Clients-Nurses-and-Organizations_joint-position-statement.pdf

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