

MEMO

Date: September 2, 2026

To: All Physicians including residents and physicians in acute care hospitals, community, and personal care home settings, nurse practitioners and community prescribers

From: Shared Health and Winnipeg Regional Health Authority Medical Leadership

Re: **Interim laboratory-ordering guidance in advance of potential Dynacare service disruption**

Collective bargaining has been ongoing between Dynacare and the union representing Dynacare lab workers. While we hope an agreement will be reached very soon, in the meantime, Manitoba's health system has been preparing for a **potential Dynacare labour disruption scheduled to begin September 8, 2026**. Dynacare provides significant support to laboratory services in Manitoba, and while many public laboratories will have extended hours to increase capacity for testing, the number of tests that can be absorbed is limited.

Effective immediately, please prioritize testing that cannot safely be delayed, and defer non-urgent, lower-risk testing for approximately two weeks or when it is deemed medically safe to do so based on clinical assessment.

Please communicate this to your clinical teams, residents, and students as this applies to both inpatient and outpatient populations.

Continue time-sensitive testing for:

- active cancer treatment or urgent cancer investigation;
- dialysis or transplant monitoring;
- pregnancy-related testing within a defined clinical window;
- anticoagulation or other high-risk medication monitoring;
- urgent diagnostic concerns affecting near-term management;
- urgent preoperative testing for procedures proceeding as scheduled;
- time-sensitive pathology or cytology;
- communicable-disease or public-health investigations; and

- frail, palliative, homebound or personal-care-home patients when testing cannot safely wait.

Use hospital outpatient laboratory services only for patients who meet a time-sensitive priority and when no appropriate community option remains available.

Patients should not be directed to emergency or urgent care departments to obtain laboratory testing. Patients can be referred to any of the locations listed on the Shared Health website: [Locations - Diagnostic Services - Shared Health](#).

Temporarily defer lower-risk testing where clinically safe, and please defer for an initial period of approximately two weeks:

- routine screening and annual examination testing;
- stable chronic-disease monitoring;
- non-urgent repeat or discretionary testing;
- insurance and employment testing; and
- standing orders not required during the disruption.

Avoid duplicate orders and bundle necessary tests where possible. Reassess deferred testing if the patient's condition changes or the disruption continues.

When ordering laboratory testing, please tell patients:

- whether their testing should proceed or be postponed;
- that all non-emergency/critical testing may be delayed;
- not to attend multiple laboratories seeking routine testing;
- not to attend an emergency department or call 911 solely for bloodwork;
- that laboratory locations and hours may change on short notice;
- to seek reassessment if their clinical condition changes while testing is deferred.

Prescribers remain responsible for tracking and reordering deferred investigations.

For the most up-to-date listing of laboratory availability, including extended hours of operation, visit the Shared Health website: [Locations - Diagnostic Services - Shared Health](#).

Further guidance and information about service availability and prioritization will be shared when new information becomes available.

Thank you for helping preserve access for patients with the most time-sensitive needs and ensuring the safety of all patients.