

Patients win with public delivery of public services

Decision to bring diagnostic labs back into system a victory for Albertans

Edmonton – Alberta’s provincial government is putting patients first by returning diagnostic lab services to the public health care umbrella.

On Friday, it was reported that the Government plans for Alberta Health Services to buy out the private laboratory testing company DynaLIFE Dx and transfer the services back to the province. This will mark an end to the expensive experiment with privatization of diagnostic services in Alberta.

“Public delivery of public services is best for the public purse. But more importantly, it’s what’s best in terms of patient safety,” Alberta Federation of Labour president Gil McGowan said. “We commend the New Democrat Government of Alberta for finding a solution to the mistakes of the previous government.”

The purchase of the DynaLIFE Dx labs is the end of the Tories third failed attempt to privatize lab services in the province, going back to Ralph Klein’s outsourcing in the mid-1990s.

“You would have thought the Conservatives could have learned from their mistakes. One disastrous attempt to privatize is a mistake. A second attempt is stupidity. The third time reeks of ideological obstinacy,” McGowan said. “Contracting out necessary services to for-profit third party providers costs taxpayers more, decreases oversight, and is inefficient. In short, it’s a recipe for disaster.”

DynaLIFE Dx runs northern Alberta's primary testing facility and 27 community sample collections sites in Edmonton and surrounding area, along with five collection sites and four health centre locations in northern and central Alberta.

“In the long run, returning these services to the public umbrella will mean lower costs for taxpayers, but it will also mean better lab services that are more integrated into the public system,” McGowan said. “This is a great decision. Minister Hoffman and Premier Notley should be commended for this.”

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