

## Canada's Largest Medical Diagnostic Testing Lab



**Sue Paish - CEO**

LifeLabs provides medical laboratory testing services, that help patients and their healthcare providers maintain or regain health through the prevention, diagnosing, treatment and monitoring of a host of factors influencing health, disease and illness in patients.

**Interview conducted by: Lynn Fosse, Senior Editor, CEOCFO Magazine**

**CEOCFO: Ms. Paish, what is LifeLabs Medical Laboratory Services?**

**Ms. Paish:** LifeLabs is Canada's largest medical diagnostic testing lab. We provide diagnostic laboratory services in British Columbia and Ontario, performing over 100 million tests for 19 million patients per year.

**CEOCFO: How are you able to get the majority of the BC market?**

**Ms. Paish:** In British Columbia, LifeLabs provides diagnostic testing in communities across the province for 'out patients', that is, for people who are not admitted to a hospital and who require medical testing. Community based out-patient testing services are also provided through the province's Health Authorities and hospitals. LifeLabs does not have the majority of the market in BC. This is held by the public sector hospitals and health authorities.

**CEOCFO: Your website indicates you care about helping patients and you use your knowledge to help identify the right course of action. Other than making sure you are doing the tests right and providing the results, how does that manifest itself day to day?**

**Ms. Paish:** LifeLabs is constantly exploring ways in which we can improve the overall patient experience. This means that we are constantly looking at how we can improve access to our services, improve the service experience and improve the overall health outcomes for patients, their health care providers and for the medical system overall. LifeLabs has taken steps in each of these areas and here are a few highlights:

**Improving patient access:** LifeLabs is the only lab in Ontario and in BC to provide online appointment booking. This service allows patients to book ahead and arrive at our labs knowing that they will be serviced quickly with minimal wait time.

**Improving the service experience:** Through our wholly owned subsidiary, Excelleris, LifeLabs provides test results electronically to health care providers very shortly after the test is concluded, providing the health care provider with fast and easy access to test results. In BC we provide the same service to patients, through our secure portal, 'myehealth'. This allows patients to access their test results and have more engagement and involvement in the management of their health.

**Improving health outcomes:** By providing better access and a better service experience LifeLabs, is helping build a healthier Canada. We are also improving health outcomes by delivering leading edge testing and testing methodologies to patients and their health care providers. LifeLabs is a leader in Canada in the field of genetic testing, recently purchasing the Canadian business of Centogene, a German based company specializing in rare genetic diseases with the world's largest data bank on rare genetic diseases. LifeLabs has also partnered with Contextual Genomics, a leading cancer research company with some of the continent's most respected researchers.

LifeLabs was also the first lab to introduce non-fasting protocols for lipid testing. One of the most common requirements for lipid testing had been that the patient fast for several hours before being tested. Through reviewing advances in technology LifeLabs was able to introduce testing methodology that allows patients to be tested without fasting, thus making it easier and more convenient for the patient to be tested and more likely that the patient will get these important tests done.

**CEO CFO: Are there guidelines or are the regulations the same in all provinces?**

**Ms. Paish:** No, in Canada each province is responsible for health care delivery and therefore each province determines the rules and regulations that govern the delivery of health care services such as diagnostic testing.

**CEO CFO: Is that why you are not able to do in Ontario what you can in BC or have you just not started it yet?**

**Ms. Paish:** Various public policy perspectives and the nature of the market in Ontario meant that some of the services and innovations that LifeLabs has implemented in BC have not yet been implemented in Ontario. However, LifeLabs is on doorstep of some innovative solutions for Ontarians.

**CEO CFO: Do people care? Do they pay attention to the lab they are going to and do they understand the differences that you provide or are they still going to what is closest and more convenient?**

**Ms. Paish:**

We hear and see that more and more people care about access, about service and about being able to receive innovative and relevant tests that will help them maintain or regain their health. This is what LifeLabs offers. With our online appointment booking service, electronic delivery of test results, access to test results by patients, genetic testing and non-fasting protocols; patients and their health care providers know that in LifeLabs they will receive trusted, high quality tests in an exceptional environment and we believe this is becoming more and more important to Canadians.

**CEO CFO: Would you tell us about some of the specialized testing you do?**

**Ms. Paish:** Genetics is the future of diagnostic medicine in the world and Canada as we move into a world of personalized medicine. Genetics is the future of health care in many ways. In that context, we have recently purchased the Canadian business of Centogene, a company out of Germany that has the largest databank of mutation information for rare diseases and the largest test menu for rare diseases. We are very much focused on becoming a leader in the genetic lab field. In British Columbia, we have recently announced a partnership with Contextual Genomics, a genetics research company regarded as industry leading in cancer genetics.

**“In less than a year we nearly doubled the size of LifeLabs, and then made meaningful steps towards becoming the leading Canadian lab in the genetics field.” - Sue Paish**

**CEO CFO: It sounds as if acquisitions are definitely part of your growth strategy.**

**Ms. Paish:** That is part of the growth strategy – acquisitions and partnerships. In April, 2013 we purchased BC Biomedical in British Columbia and in October, 2013 we purchased CML Healthcare, the result of which has given LifeLabs and reach and depth as the largest diagnostic lab in Canada, to be able explore and deliver new tests, new service and innovations in an effective and cost efficient manner, all focused on building a healthier Canada.

**CEO CFO: What has surprised you about LifeLabs since you have become CEO?**

**Ms. Paish:** I think there are two things that surprised me: One is the degree of opportunity and change that is on the horizon. The opportunity to transform health care delivery through a transformed diagnostic lab environment and service delivery model is a real possibility in Canada. There are opportunities to continue to improve health outcomes and the patient experience through technology and through genetics. What surprised me is how much change and how relevant the changes will be as we pursue our goal of building a healthier Canada. The second thing that surprised me perhaps is how quickly we were able to start to implement change. In less than a year we nearly doubled the size of LifeLabs, and then made meaningful steps towards becoming the leading Canadian lab in the genetics field. What did not surprise me is that the LifeLabs team, from our front line staff through to our senior leaders have had patients first and foremost in our minds as we plan for the future and it our staff and our patient service teams who will help us all build a healthier Canada, one patient and one test at a time.

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## **LifeLabs Medical Laboratory Services**

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