



Microbiology



It is with sadness that we are saying au revoir to our good friend and colleague, Dr. Michael Payne. Dr. Payne has

accepted a position in Vancouver where his new colleagues will benefit from his expertise and dry sense of humor. Dr. Payne played a crucial role during the pandemic, providing exemplary leadership to the Infection and Prevention Control program as well as Microbiology services. We will sorely miss Mike and wish him and his family all the best in this new endeavor.

Microbiology's Total Laboratory Automation is well underway. Vendor, Becton Dickinson (BD), has been on site building the modules since July 17. As many of you may not realize, the new BD instrumentation is a world-first installment. In order to fully appreciate this, our corporate partners are planning and have initiated some events to highlight the overall benefits of this project. Corporate Communications will be producing a video which will capture the progress and various aspects of the project. Our validation team is preparing and planning to transition our most common specimens such as screening culture specimens, urine and blood cultures, with implementation of other specimens over time. Furthermore, the project has already led to quality improvement within the Microbiology laboratory. As an example, our urine processing workflow has been reviewed in order to be fully adaptable to automation.

PaLM Rounding

Leadership rounding by David and John with staff began early this summer with visits to Transfusion Medicine and Specialty Biochemistry (Clinical Immunology, Endocrinology, Toxicology and Therapeutic Drug Monitoring, Trace Elements, Biochemical Genetics). Upcoming rounding dates include Surgical Pathology, Point of Care Testing, and Autopsy Services, with more to be scheduled into 2024.





In photo: Abby Crozier, Jenny Vereecken, Dr. Jeff Fuller

Pathology

The long-anticipated Tracking Transformation Project has now been officially implemented and is running smoothly. Many thanks to all those whose hard work made this possible.

In staffing news, Dr. Simone Illman and her family are moving, so she will be leaving us in September. Dr. Illman has been an integral part of our GI, cytopathology and molecular teams. She will be missed and we wish Dr. Illman and her family the best.

Also in staffing news, we are happy to welcome our newest pathologists, Dr. Anurag Sharma (started in August) and Dr. Bojana Djordjevic (starting in September). We look forward to their contributions to the department.

Laboratory Medicine

The validation process for the new high-resolution mass spectrometer (Agilent Q-TOF) is progressing smoothly - thank you Dr Matthew Nichols. The acquisition of this state-of-the-art instrument was made possible by a generous \$2 million donation from an anonymous donor. This advanced technology, known for its exceptional sensitivity, promises to enhance our capacity to identify minute quantities of monoclonal proteins in patients with plasma cell dyscrasias. The anticipated outcome is a more refined understanding of patient conditions, leading to improved decisions concerning patient care. Moreover, this cutting-edge equipment holds the potential to advance patient outcomes by facilitating ongoing research efforts.

The Special Biochemistry Laboratory, specifically the Trace Metal Lab, has recently taken a significant step forward by acquiring two state-of-the-art inductively coupled plasma mass spectrometers (ICP-MS) for trace element testing. These new acquisitions mark a substantial change, replacing instrumentation that has been in use for over 18 years. The forthcoming phases involve the installation and validation of these advanced instruments, which will take place once the necessary electrical and exhaust upgrades have been completed.

Laboratory medicine continues its Choosing Wisely Campaign to reduce repeat testing for a number of biochemical tests. Thus far we have seen a greater than 90 percent reduction in repeat HBA1c and Vitamin D repeated within 90 days.

New Hires in PaLM in Q4 (April to June 2023)

Name	Job Title	Department Name
Melissa Hodges	Medical Lab Assistant	Pathology
Daniel Blaxall	Medical Lab Assistant	Pathology
Janice Lee	Medical Lab Technologist	Transfusion Medicine
Reese Kirsten	Medical Lab Technologist	Microbiology
Sharanya Nagarasa	Medical Lab Assistant	Specimen Receiving
Donna Sa-Avedra	Medical Lab Assistant	Specimen Receiving
Adam Montgomery	Medical Lab Assistant	Specimen Receiving
Irna Lasam	Medical Lab Technologist	Core Lab, UH
Shweta Pinto	Medical Lab Assistant	Specimen Receiving
Susan Skinner	Medical Lab Assistant	Specimen Receiving
Stacy Dawdry	Lab Clerk	Client Services
Meghann Scoyne	Secretary	Pathology
Charmaine Dusic	Secretary	Pathology
Stacey Boulianne	Registered Practical Nurse	Lab Test Centre

Welcomed Back

Name	Job Title	Department Name
Dawne Johnson	Medical Lab Technologist	Transfusion Medicine

PaLM Director Leadership

In August, PaLM welcomed two new directors to the leadership team, joining Sue Milburn and Nicole Girotti – Abby Crozier and Rick Ermacora.



Abby Crozier, Director Regional Partnerships (Portfolio-wide: PaLM and Imaging)

Abby joined PaLM Microbiology mid-pandemic providing leadership to maintain routine services while supporting the equivalent of 500 years of seasonal flu testing in the COVID-19 lab and unprecedented hiring and training. Prior to joining PaLM, Abby served for several years as the Technical Supervisor at the Barnes Jewish Hospital in St. Louis, Missouri. Abby holds a Bachelor of Science in Biology with Thesis from the University of Windsor, and her Advance Diploma for Medical Laboratory Technologist from The Michener Institute in Toronto, Ontario. She is a professional member of the Canadian Society of Medical Laboratory Sciences, and the College of Medical Laboratory Technologists of Ontario. In her Manager role, Abby has successfully supported and led a number of initiatives including the current Total Lab Automation project, which will transform and innovate the Program of Microbiology.

Rick Ermacora, Director Pathology and Molecular Diagnostics

Rick started his career at LHSC as a Medical Laboratory Technologist over 25 years ago in the Core Laboratory at University Hospital. Expanding on his experience, Rick progressed through multiple leadership roles including Senior Technologist, Coordinator, and most recently Manager of Core Laboratory and Flowcytometry. Rick has been involved in many large projects throughout his career including the Lab Medicine Transformation project, in which he helped lead a dedicated team towards improving Laboratory Medicine. Rick has a Medical Laboratory Technology Diploma from Mohawk College, has recently completed his Bachelor of Technology Degree, and will soon be enrolled in a Master's program. Rick's progressive leadership experience and determination will help lead a dedicated Laboratory team toward achieving our future goals. In his new role, Rick will lead the operations of Pathology and Molecular Diagnostics, in dyad-leadership roles with Dr. Aaron Haig and Dr. Bekim Sadikovic.



Nicole Girotti, Director Laboratory Medicine and Microbiology

Nicole joined PaLM in January 2022 as the Director of Laboratory Medicine. Her journey with us began after her tenure leading strategic projects and research operations at Western University. Nicole holds a PhD in Anatomy & Cell Biology, in addition to certifications in leadership, conflict resolution, project management, human resources, occupational health and safety. Nicole is working towards her Certified Health Executive (CHE) designation and her bachelor's degree in accounting. Her unwavering dedication to professional growth continues to enrich the capabilities of PaLM and strengthen our collaborative partnerships. Her visionary acumen has been instrumental in charting the course for the future of Laboratory Medicine, ensuring it remains at the forefront of innovation and patient care. Nicole also skillfully nurtures PaLM's executive-level relationships with our esteemed regional partners, overseeing strategic pathways for optimization that amplify our collective service and impact.



We extend our heartfelt appreciation for Nicole's unparalleled contributions and

eagerly anticipate the continued ascent of PaLM under her leadership. In her new role, Nicole will lead the operations of Laboratory Medicine and Microbiology, in dyad-leadership roles with Dr. Ian Chin-Yee and Dr. Johan Delpont.

Sue Milburn, Director, Quality and Project Management (Portfolio-wide: PaLM and Imaging)

Sue has had an extensive career serving the laboratories in London for 32 years as a Medical Laboratory Technologist and leader. Sue holds an advanced Medical Laboratory Technology diploma and is a Certified Health Executive (CHE) with the Canadian College of Health Leaders (CCHL). She is currently serving as a Director at Large with the Medical Laboratory Professionals Association of Ontario (MLPAO). With more than 21 years of leadership experience, she has spent the last 12 years working as a Manager providing leadership to PaLM's clinical programs of Microbiology, Pathology and Molecular Diagnostics. In the past year, she has served as Interim Director for both Quality and Project Management as well as Molecular Diagnostics. Throughout her leadership journey with PaLM, Sue has built strong and effective relationships across the city with support teams like People & Culture, Occupational Health / Joint Health and Safety, and HMMS.

