

NEW

October 17, 2008

Directions

Public health labs set to transfer to new provincial agency

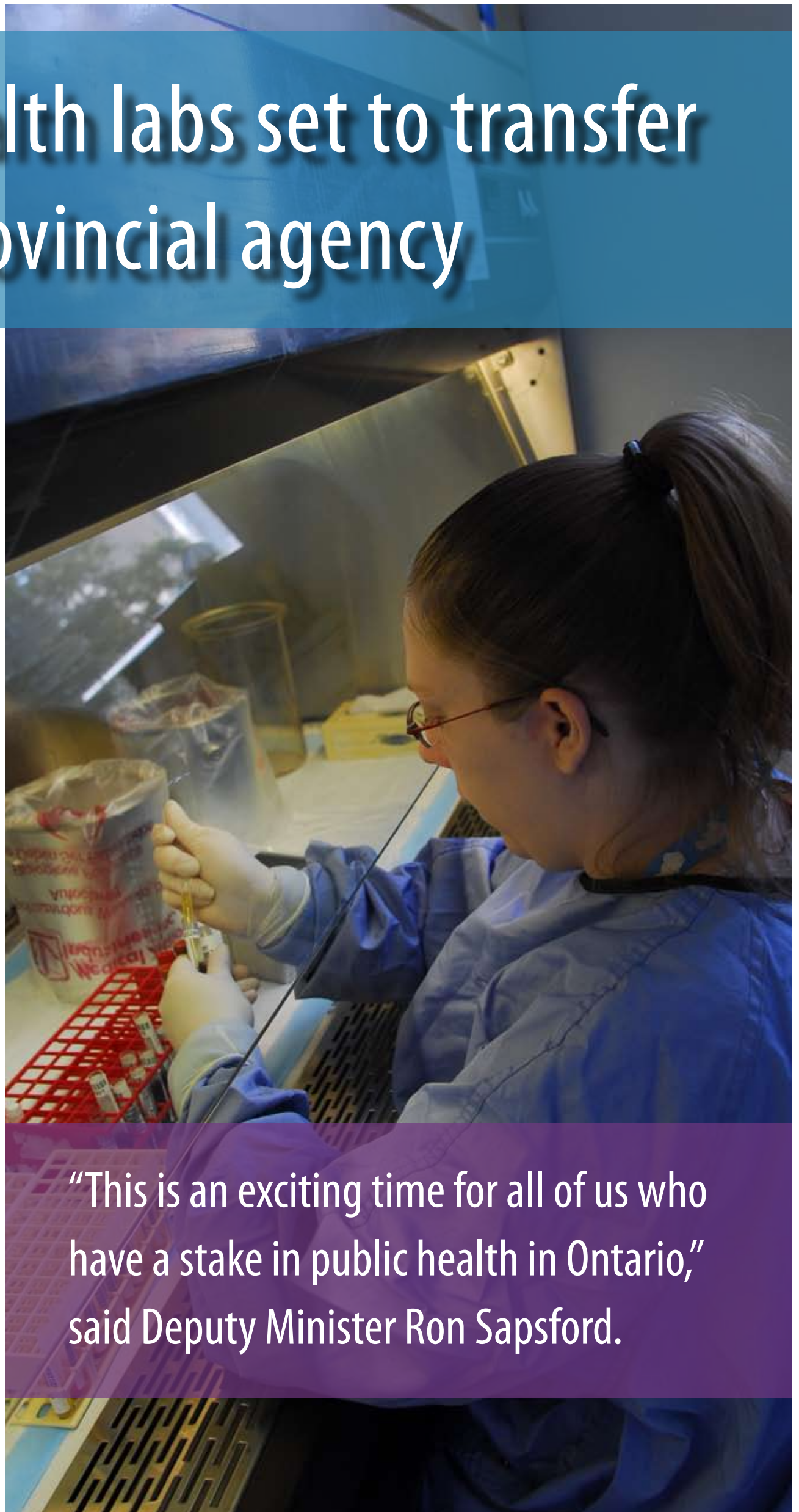
On December 15th, all employees, programs and functions of Ontario Public Health Laboratories (OPHL) will be transferred to the newly created Ontario Agency for Health Protection and Promotion (OAHP).

“This is an exciting time for all of us who have a stake in public health in Ontario,” said Deputy Minister Ron Sapsford. “The transfer supports the mandate of the Ontario Agency for Health Protection and Promotion to provide scientific and technical advice and on-the-ground support to front-line health workers, public health units and the Ontario government on all public health matters.”

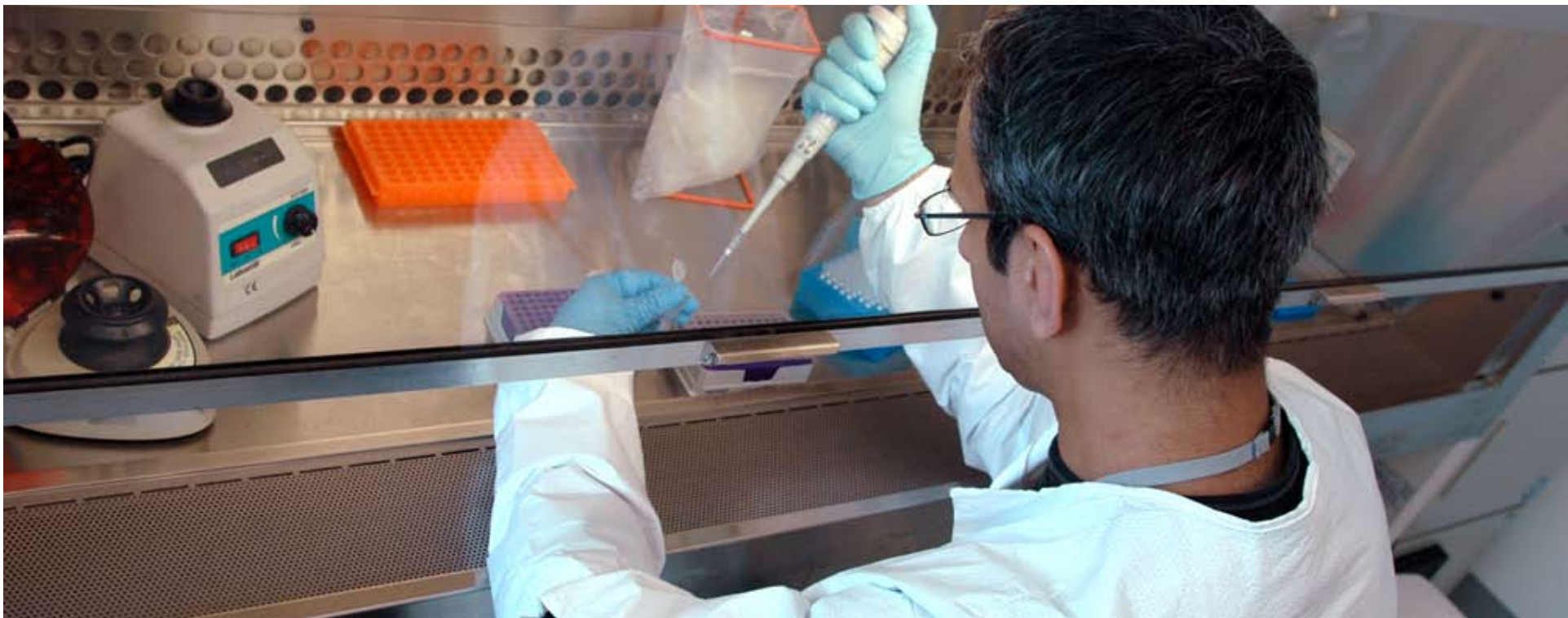
The OAHP was established in June 2007 as a result of Operation Health Protection, the three-year action plan which was launched after the SARS outbreak to kick start the renewal of public health in Ontario. Operation Health Protection, supported by numerous public health experts, called for the creation of an arm's length, public health agency. OAHP will serve as a central hub linking Ontario's public health researchers, practitioners and health care workers to the best scientific knowledge from around the world.

Sapsford said that the transfer of public health labs to the OAHP also aligns with the government's service modernization direction and the ministry's role as steward, where it has moved from a

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Instructional Media Centre photos

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program-based organization to a functional model.

“The transfer will strengthen lab capabilities in the province by integrating testing, surveillance and research,” the deputy minister said. “This is an excellent opportunity for OPHL employees to be there at the beginning of building a new organization that will be an essential component of public health in Ontario.”

Sapsford thanked OPHL employees for their efforts. “The employees of Ontario’s public health labs are an essential part of Ontario’s public health care system today and will be in the future. I know that the knowledge, skills and professionalism that you demonstrated at the ministry will serve you well at the Ontario Agency for Health Protection and Promotion,” Sapsford said.

The ministry and the agency have been working closely to ensure seamless service

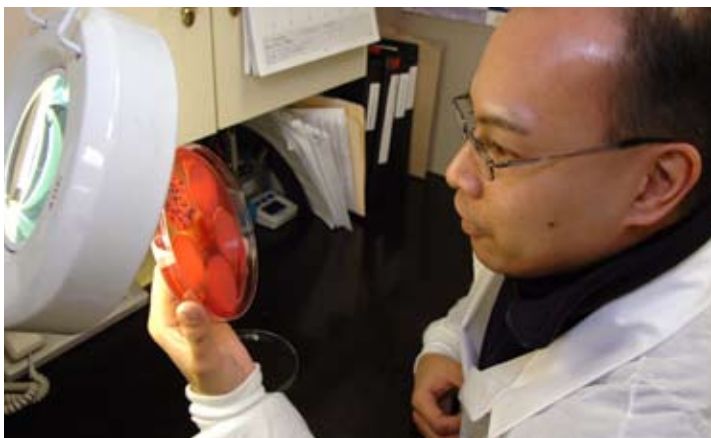
continuity and a smooth transition for OPHL employees and clients. “We anticipate little to no impact on business operations as the transfer occurs,” said Dr. Don Low, medical director of the OPHL.

Low said that transferring the public health labs to the OAHPP improves Ontario’s capacity to manage and respond more effectively to outbreaks and public health emergencies. Ontario’s 12 public health labs perform more than four million tests annually and these lab results drive many critical diagnoses, treatments and health care decisions.

“The personnel and expertise we have today in the public health labs will be a fundamental part of the agency and its capacity to create knowledge,” Low said. “The transfer will allow the agency to build its scientific expertise on the existing solid foundation within the public health laboratories.” ■

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Medical Director, OPHL



Employees of Ontario Public Health Laboratories (OPHL) are transferring to the Ontario Agency for Health Protection and Promotion (OAHPP), an organization created to protect and promote the health of all Ontarians. The agency will serve as a central hub linking Ontario’s public health researchers, practitioners and health care workers to the best scientific knowledge from around the world. In addition to infectious diseases, the OAHPP’s mandate includes health promotion, chronic disease and injury prevention, as well as occupational and environmental health. Featured in these photos are OPHL employees from across the province.

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