

UNIFY FOR SOMETHING GREATER. HEALTHCARE EXCELLENCE AWAITS.



The laboratory's role as the 'backbone' of a strong health system

Insights from the laboratory not only offer critical insights for patient care, but also inform the strategic planning of health systems. We spoke with Craig Ivany, Chief Provincial Diagnostics Officer for the Provincial Health Services Authority in British Columbia, Canada, who emphasized the importance of investing in laboratory medicine and encouraging its integration into care innovation projects.

As a champion of laboratory medicine and a leader in the field yourself, what advice do you have for health systems to maximize patient-centric care?

I believe that a strong lab is the backbone of a strong health system. The laboratory itself provides a tremendous amount of insight and information that supports decision-making for both patients and clinicians. It also contributes to administration, helping leaders understand the needs of patients, by virtue of the breadth and depth of data that we have at our fingertips.

My advice to leaders would be to value the investment you make in lab medicine by bringing it into the multidisciplinary collaborations that improve patient care. It's important to understand that, though the laboratory may be removed from direct patient care, it's an important part of the patient care team and can contribute tremendous insights that can lead to better care and improved outcomes.

Specifically as it relates to laboratory medicine, how can we inspire laboratory professionals to become leaders?

Our specialists and our staff are focused on their area of expertise and don't always get the opportunity to have broader conversations. As a leader, I look to find ways for my laboratory teams to come out from behind the bench and get involved in strategic planning and high-level discussions about the delivery of healthcare. I lead by example—I push myself to have challenging conversations outside of the lab and mentor up-and-coming clinicians who I can bring into those conversations. At the same time, it's also important to enable non-laboratorians to appreciate our work and bring them into discussions.

Tell us a little bit about what you're doing in your role as Chief Provincial Diagnostics Officer in British Columbia.

British Columbia has a population of about five million, and it has a vast geographic area to deal with. Our healthcare services are publicly funded and publicly administered by six different healthcare



Craig Ivany
Chief Provincial
Diagnostics Officer,
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authorities. Much of my time is spent trying to bridge those authorities so that we can practice as a unified service for all the citizens of our province. We're working to break down siloes and create an interrelated, interconnected systemwide lab service that is responsive to the needs of every citizen. The COVID-19 pandemic really taught us that we can and must work as a single system. It demonstrated the value of the laboratory in working closely with clinicians to solve major issues in health delivery, and we're now looking at the positive lessons we learned that we can leverage to make our laboratory system stronger as a provincial system, like putting point-of-care and near-bench technologies in remote indigenous communities that historically haven't had access to lab services.

You're a strong advocate for the UNIVANTS of Healthcare Excellence™ program, which recognizes care teams that are innovating to achieve measurably better outcomes. What makes this award program special?

What makes it special is the approach that was taken in creating the UNIVANTS model. UNIVANTS recognizes the significant impact the laboratory can have on clinical programs that solve the biggest challenges we face in delivering better healthcare. It draws upon the significance of our work. It doesn't just focus on the innovations within the lab, but rather the broader impact they have on health outcomes.

Why should healthcare innovators apply for the UNIVANTS of Healthcare Excellence award?

Laboratorians don't often seek the limelight—they draw their inspiration and desire to do good work from the notion that they're providing high-quality patient care and making a difference in the life of a patient. That's why it's important for leaders to take time to step back and ensure laboratorians are recognized for their important work. As healthcare leaders, we all have a responsibility to advocate for our people and support programs such as UNIVANTS, which tell our story.

Applications for the 2021 awards open August 1st. Prepare now at UnivantsHCE.com.



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