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ONTARIO'S COMMUNITY LABORATORIES TO BEGIN ROUTINE REPORTING OF eGFR

Ontario's community laboratories will begin routinely reporting an estimated glomerular filtration rate (eGFR) when practitioners order a serum creatinine test for their patients. "It is a fundamental move in support of the earlier detection of kidney disease in Ontario," said Paul Gould, CEO of the Ontario Association of Medical Laboratories (OAML), in announcing an October 1st target date for the initiative. "Our member laboratories will be working with the Canadian External Quality Assessment Laboratory (CEQAL) to standardize laboratory test results and the OAML will be developing communications to physicians and patient information in preparation for the change," said Gould.

The eGFR provides practitioners with a more sensitive measure of renal function and can lead to earlier detection of kidney disease. Earlier detection and earlier intervention can save lives.

One in five Canadian seniors now has kidney disease, according to the Kidney Foundation of Canada and that number is growing by 10 percent per year. For most forms of kidney disease there is no known cure.

Diabetes is the most common cause of kidney disease in Canada, but kidney disease is also associated with hypertension and the metabolic syndrome. The Kidney Foundation of Canada reports that an estimated 1.9 million Canadians have some form of kidney disease but that most are unaware of it. Early diagnosis and treatment are key to managing kidney disease and to avoiding or, at least, delaying the need for costly dialysis or kidney transplantation.

In a recent study by Dr. Ayub Akbari *et al.*¹ at the Ottawa Hospital, laboratory reporting of an estimated GFR coupled with an educational program markedly improved the recognition of chronic kidney disease (CKD) in the primary care setting. Recognition of CKD increased from 22.4 % of patients to 85.1 % when primary care practitioners received a laboratory report of an eGFR and had participated in an education program as part of the study.

"We need to identify kidney disease earlier and provide people the information they need to manage the disease themselves," says Gould. "This one small change can make a huge difference in disease detection, in chronic kidney disease management and in the quality of life for so many."

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¹ Archives of Internal Medicine September 13, 2004 Akbari *et al.*, *Detection of Chronic Kidney Disease With Laboratory Reporting of Estimated Glomerular Filtration Rate and an Educational Program.*