

EWQA NEWSLETTER

AUGUST 2026
ISSUE 7

WELCOME TO THE ENHANCED WATER QUALITY ASSURANCE (EWQA) NEWSLETTER, AN E-UPDATE TO KEEP PROVINCIAL HEALTH OFFICER (PHO) APPROVED DRINKING WATER TESTING LABORATORIES AND PARTNERS INFORMED ABOUT EWQA ACTIVITIES.

TO BE A RECOGNIZED QUALITY PARTNER IN DRINKING WATER MICROBIOLOGY LABORATORY BEST PRACTICES FOR THE PROTECTION OF THE PUBLIC HEALTH OF ALL BRITISH COLUMBIANS.

NEWSLETTER WORKING GROUP: JENMEI HE, VEENITA SINGH, AMAN GALYMOV

MEET SANDRA CHOW ADVANCING LABORATORY QUALITY

Sandra Chow is the Director of Laboratory Quality and Process Improvement with Provincial Laboratory Medicine Services (PLMS) in British Columbia. In this role, she leads initiatives that strengthen quality systems, support accreditation readiness, and drive continuous improvement across the Lower Mainland laboratory network. Her work focuses on enhancing patient safety, standardizing practices, and improving process efficiency through collaboration and data-informed decision-making.

Sandra has extensive experience in laboratory quality, operations, and system-level improvement. She has led the development of regional guidelines across the Lower Mainland and is currently advancing initiatives such as a laboratory turnaround time dashboard to support performance monitoring and transparency across sites.



WHAT'S NEW

Meet Sandra Chow

Advancing Laboratory Quality



EWQA Assessor Workshop

October 16, 2026



PTC Now Approved by EWQA

Effective June 25, 2026

As an EWQA Committee Member, Sandra values the program's role in promoting consistency, objectivity, and shared learning across laboratories. She sees EWQA as a key platform for strengthening partnerships, supporting best practices, and fostering continuous improvement.

Outside of work, Sandra enjoys spending time with her family, traveling, and exploring the outdoors.



Sandra Chow

EWQA ASSESSOR WORKSHOP 2026

DATE: OCTOBER 16, 2026

TIME: 9:30 A.M. – 3:00 P.M.

FORMAT: MICROSOFT TEAMS

PTC NOW APPROVED BY EWQA

EFFECTIVE JUNE 25, 2026, THE EWQA PROGRAM RECOGNIZES PTC AS AN APPROVED PROFICIENCY TESTING PROVIDER IN ADDITION TO CMPT.

What laboratories need to know

- Complete at least two satisfactory PT surveys each year through an approved provider.
- Use one primary provider—CMPT or PTC—for each EWQA assessment year.
- Limited exceptions apply for off-cycle corrective actions and justified mid-year transitions.
- Obtain two consecutive satisfactory results for an initial EWQA application, approval of a new method or medium, or follow-up to an unsatisfactory result or certification suspension.

Changing providers

- Notify the EWQA Provincial Coordinator at least 30 days before the planned change.
- Submit PT results to EWQA within two weeks of receiving the provider's report.
- Update relevant laboratory documentation for review at the next onsite assessment.

Frequently asked questions:

1. What has changed?

EWQA now recognizes PTC as an approved PT provider in addition to CMPT.

2. Must a laboratory use only one PT provider?

Yes. A laboratory must designate one primary provider—CMPT or PTC—for a single EWQA assessment year (calendar year), regardless of how many EWQA-approved methods it uses.

3. Why is one primary provider required?

Using one primary provider supports consistent evaluation, fair and comparable assessment across laboratories, and alignment with each provider's grading system.

4. Can a laboratory change providers during the year?

Generally, laboratories should remain with their primary provider for routine PT participation during the assessment year. A secondary approved provider may be used for an off-cycle corrective action or a justified mid-year transition.

5. What are the minimum PT requirements?

To maintain PHO-approved status, a laboratory must achieve satisfactory results in at least two PT surveys each year. Two consecutive satisfactory results are also required for a new laboratory application, a new method or medium approval, or follow-up to an unsatisfactory result or certification suspension.

6. What happens after a missed or unsatisfactory routine PT result?

If EWQA requires an off-cycle PT as part of corrective action, either of the approved providers may be used. A laboratory may request an off-cycle PT through CMPT or participate in the next available PTC round, as appropriate for the corrective-action timeline

7. What if a laboratory uses several EWQA-approved methods?

The laboratory must continue routine PT participation for all of its EWQA-approved methods, including different enzyme-substrate methods such as Colilert-18 and Colilert-24.

8. How does a laboratory transition between CMPT and PTC?

Provide EWQA with 30 days' advance notice, submit results within two weeks of receiving the report, and update internal documentation. EWQA will review the documentation at the next onsite assessment.

9. When does the policy take effect?

The policy is effective June 25, 2026. Laboratories do not need to interrupt an existing PT schedule and may transition during their next planned PT cycle. Full implementation is expected by 2027.

10. How should PTC results be submitted?

Submit the PTC result report to EWQA within two weeks of receiving it.