The Editor

The Irish Times

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Dublin 2

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Dear Sir

The Medical Laboratory Scientists Association (MLSA) welcomes the apology by Taoiseach Leo Varadkar, on behalf of the State, to the women and families affected by the Cervical Check scandal. However, the statement did not specifically include an apology for the 2008 decision to outsource the cervical screening testing to laboratories outside of the State. This omission is perhaps understandable as the decision was made by a previous government and once it was made it was difficult to reverse. However, this decision started the whole cascade of events off, as it disconnected the cervical screening testing from the medical treatment of the patients that resulted from it and turned the testing into a business opportunity.

Mr. Varadkar speaks of the importance of learning the lessons that Cervical Check teaches us, including that decisions on testing should be made based on quality not cost. The MLSA agrees and calls on the government to reassure all health service users that not only will all cervical screening be repatriated at the earliest opportunity, but that the lesson has been learned that Irish medical laboratory testing should be performed in Irish laboratories accredited by the Irish National Accreditation Board (INAB) and by medical scientists trained to Irish standards and subject to Irish regulatory and statutory registration requirements. Quality and patient safety must always come before cost and health testing must be a patient service, not an opportunity for profit.

Yours etc

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