

“As rural as you can get.”

“The result would have been too late. The patient would have died without it.”

In dialogue with Dr. KY, it was revealed that this community is “as rural as you can get.” According to Dr. KY, **cell phone use “is nil” and land-line use is limited. “It can be very difficult to reach patients.”**

When asked about the relevancy of access to laboratory testing in their rural-community practice, Dr. KY described it is as “very important.” Dr. KY was asked to elaborate on the significance of lab testing access by way of an example of patients who benefited from having laboratory testing services in their rural clinic.

Dr. KY replied, “I could give **a hundred examples.**” In my area, we have a large population of diabetic patients. If I could not do A1C testing or a fasting blood sugar test, it would be detrimental to the patient.”

Despite being in a remote area, the clinic maintains needed patient care that is supported with convenient access to test results given by in-house clinical lab services.

However, if the practice had to reduce or lose the laboratory services available at the clinic, this would have a major impact on all of their patients, especially their elderly patients. “It would be severe,” described Dr. KY. In describing the impact, Dr. KY shared that the closest lab is approximately a 40-mile drive from the clinic.

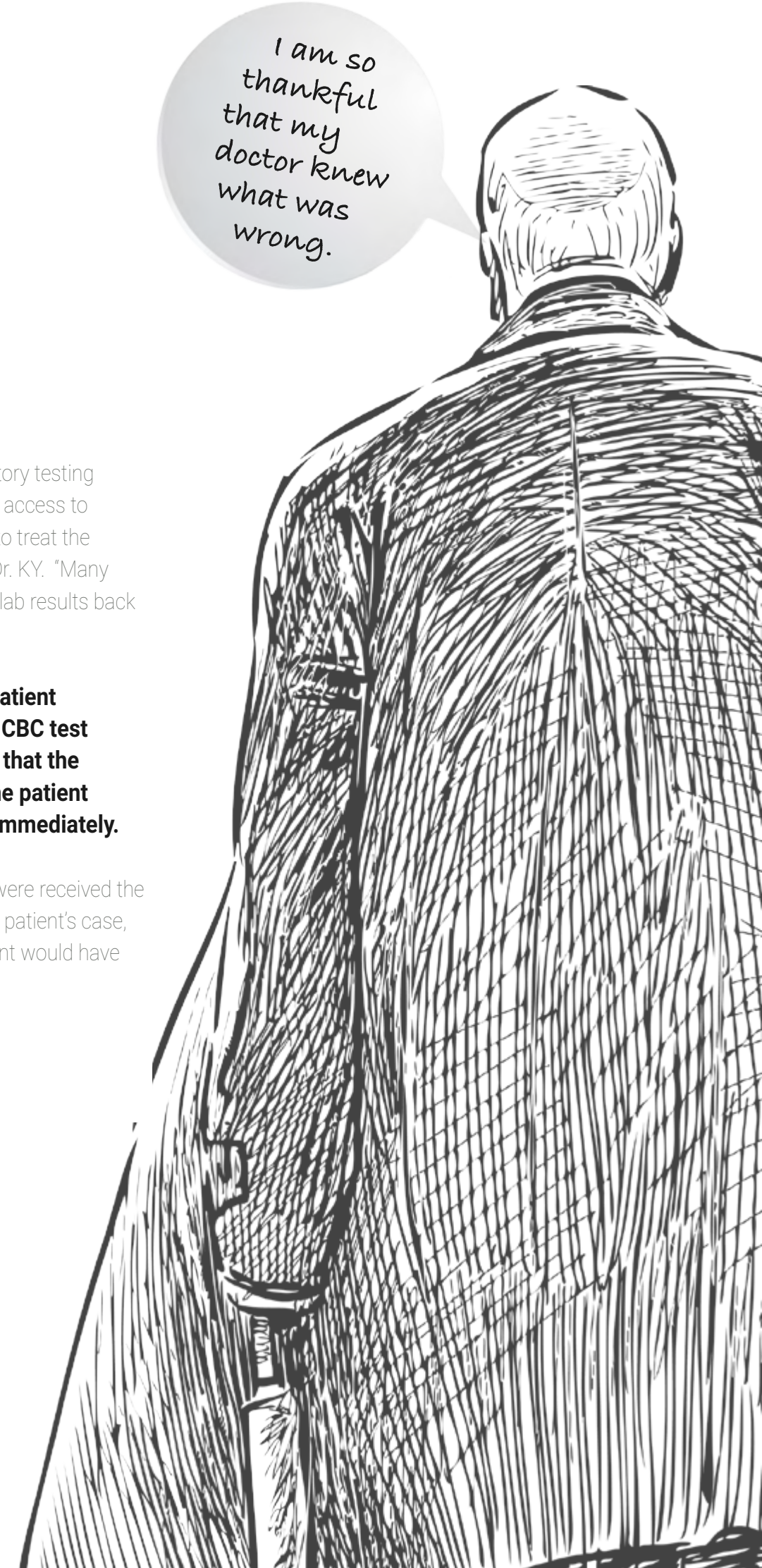
Furthermore, if the clinic-based laboratory services were reduced or lost, patients would need to travel solely to receive laboratory services. Dr. KY notes that this would be **“very impractical.”** This increase in transportation would present not only logistical challenges for elderly patients but financial challenges as well.

In Dr. KY’s expert opinion, if patients were to be referred to another lab to get their lab work done, the financial burden combined with transportation needs would be unbearable to many elderly patients and “most would not go.”

Access to needed clinical laboratory testing at the clinic also supports timely access to test results. “It simply allows us to treat the conditions promptly” explained Dr. KY. “Many times, it is not acceptable to get lab results back the next day,” he added.

In a recent case, an elderly patient complaining of fatigue got a CBC test done showing this physician that the “hemoglobin level was 6.” The patient needed a blood transfusion immediately.

Dr. KY shared that if the results were received the next day or 36 hours later, in this patient’s case, they would be too late, “the patient would have died without it.”



I am so thankful that my doctor knew what was wrong.