

Iowa Association for
Clinical Laboratory Science

NewsScope

I o w a A s s o c i a t i o n f o r C l i n i c a l L a b o r a t o r y S c i e n c e s

As winter's official start date began December 22, the Annual Meeting Committee was already looking to GO WILD in the spring, as early as November! What a spring we think it will be! The annual meeting will be held at the Coralville Marriott Hotel & Conference Center April 9, 10, and 11th.

This year's meeting is a collaboration of three professional organizations – ASCP, ASCLS-IA, and CLMA Iowa. This meeting will offer over 40 hours of P.A.C.E. approved continuing education credits including topics on Licensure, new testing and methods, and an ASCP sponsored Hematology workshop.

Along with the many learning opportunities, it would not be a successful annual meeting without social and professional networking opportunities. Again this year, the meeting will feature two social events, a Meet and Greet with Silent Auction and Knowledge Bowl Competition on Wednesday evening and a trip to Natural History Museum in Macbride Hall on the University of Iowa Campus on Thursday.

Also, this is the time to see what the society has accomplished over the year at the Annual Business Meeting on Thursday morning and to consider getting involved by joining a committee or consider being a candidate on the Election Ballot. Don't miss the Awards Luncheon on Wednesday where we honor those that have been vital contributors to our profession and state.

Back by popular demand again this year are Institutional Registration Passes along with Full and Daily Individual Registrations! Look in your mailbox or look for the meeting brochure along with electronic copies on www.ascls-ia.org in February.

Please plan on joining us this spring and book your room now! Room rates are \$95.00/night before March 18th using the code ASCLS-A/CLMA JOINT.

We hope you come and GO WILD with all the professional opportunities ASCLS-IA has to offer!





As current president of the organization I have received a lot of communication regarding licensure. This is a very large complex issue both at the state and national level. At the 2008 spring meeting there will be a general session and panel discussion on this issue which I hope many of you will attend. The following are my thoughts and editorial comments on licensure.

Laboratory medicine is the only allied health profession that does not require individual licensure in Iowa. None of us would think of having our drug prescriptions filled by an unlicensed pharmacist or have an IV started by an unlicensed nurse. Yet, personnel that are cross matching the blood you may need for surgery or performing laboratory testing that may influence your diagnosis and treatment are not licensed. The next time you go to your hair or nail salon, check out the wall and note that personnel who cut your hair or polish your nails are licensed. The federal regulation called CLIA'88 (Clinical Laboratory Improvement Amendment of 1988) that many refer to as a regulation for laboratory personnel sets only minimum standards, regulating the lowest minimum standards for personnel performing laboratory tests.

Some definitions:

Licensure – “A process by which an agency of government grants permission to the individual to engage in a given occupation upon finding that the applicant has attained the minimal degree of competency required to ensure that the public health, safety, and welfare will be reasonably well protected”. (Simberg, 1978) Most licensure laws include the following components: education (entry level requirements and continuing education), examination (national or state certification), ethics (standards of professional behavior), and experience (grandfathering into the field or alternative avenues of qualification). To obtain a license usually means paying a fee, meeting personnel standards, and continuing education.

Certification is not synonymous with licensure; certification simply means that a person has the appropriate qualifications to fulfill the duties of the profession, usually by passing an examination. Certification does not regulate the profession, nor does it ensure the quality of the person’s performance on the job. Examples of agencies that certify laboratory personnel are ASCP, NCA, and AMT. These organizations all now have CMP (certification maintenance programs) that mandate continuing education in order to maintain certification.

Why should laboratory professionals in Iowa look at licensure? Licensure of laboratory personnel will minimize harmful outcomes due to practitioner error because of inadequate or inappropriate training. There are many examples of harm caused to patients by laboratory errors. Any one of a 1000 tests that a laboratory performs has the potential to be performed incorrectly. A wrong laboratory test result can mean misdiagnosis or death, no diagnosis and no treatment when needed, incorrect diagnosis and improper treatment with harmful outcomes, repeat testing due to questionable results, costly follow-up procedures, including unnecessary surgery, worry and anxiety for patients and parents/families, additional costs to the healthcare system and financial hardship for the consumer public. Licensure of laboratory practitioners in Iowa will help reduce the escalating cost of healthcare through increased quality and consistency of services. It gives us an opportunity to improve upon the inadequacies of federal regulations (CLIA). Data from the CMS Certification of Waiver and Provider Performed Microscopy Procedures Pilot Project shows that laboratories in states with laboratory licensure programs performed better overall than those states that did not. This project confirmed CMS’s concerns about quality problems in these laboratories i.e. identified the dangerous combination of not following instructions and lack of testing personnel training. One of the CMS recommendations is to validate the effectiveness of the educational approach; licensure and continuing education requirements can help achieve this goal.

Fears and Opposition:

- The personnel shortage will get worse – there is little data to support that states with licensure have higher personnel shortages
- There is no link between quality and licensure
- Licensure puts limits on the Pathologist/Medical director in selecting employees
- Adds another layer of regulation on top of CLIA

Benefits:

- Improved image of the profession
- People thinking of entering the field will be part of a licensed profession
- Networking
- Prevents undesirables from working in the field
- Remove individuals who are incompetent

Where do we go from here? We have formed a coalition in Iowa to look into licensure. The following organizations have been contacted to be part of the coalition: ASCLS-IA, CLMA, ASCP, AMT, and Iowa Public Health Association. As members of our organization, go out and talk to co-workers, other healthcare professionals and healthcare consumers about the laboratory and how vital it is to the healthcare system. Listen to ideas and suggestions. If we all work together we can improve healthcare quality for the people of the state of Iowa. I hope to see many of you at the meeting in Coralville in April, 2008. If you would like to be involved in this coalition, please contact me, Liz Kirkpatrick, or Keri Erickson. Our contact information is available on our web site.

Jan Frerichs, President, ASLS-IA



American Society for Clinical Laboratory Science
Voice, Value, Vision

ASCLS is excited to solicit applications for the 2008-2009 ASCLS Leadership Academy. The program is designed to foster leadership skills and commitment to ASCLS in its members.

The one-year program, designed for a select group of ASCLS members, includes a variety of learning opportunities. Participants will:

- ◆ Attend leadership workshops in conjunction with the 2008 ASCLS Annual Meeting in Washington, DC (July 29-August 2), the 2009 Legislative Symposium in

Washington, DC (mid-March) and the 2009 ASCLS Annual Meeting in Chicago, IL (July 21-25).

- ◆ Participate in a series of conference calls to develop and perfect leadership skills.
- ◆ Complete a Leadership Academy Program Project and present findings at the 2009 ASCLS Annual Meeting.

ASCLS is seeking candidates for the 2008-2009 class of the ASCLS Leadership Academy and we are asking for your help in identifying persons who may benefit from participating in the Leadership Academy.

You are encouraged to nominate or recommend:

1- Individuals who have held, or currently hold, leadership positions within constituent society organizations and have a desire to further develop their leadership skills.

2- Individuals whose leadership potential has been recognized by constituent society officers, board members or others in leadership roles.

3- Individuals who have demonstrated leadership potential by participating in leadership activities within constituent society organizations.

Participants will be chosen based on recommendations, commitment to the program and ASCLS, and written responses to essay questions.

All interested ASCLS members should go to the ASCLS website (<http://www.ascls.org/members/Academy/index.asp>) for application forms and instructions. Completed applications must be received by **March 31, 2008** to be considered for the 2008-2009 class.



American Society for Clinical Laboratory Science
Voice, Value, Vision

Maintaining Current Certification as a Laboratory Professional

Recently the ASCP Board of Registry and the NCA have been discussing merging their certification programs. In light of the challenge and sensitivity of this task, that issue will not be addressed at this time. However, the recertification or certification maintenance within both programs needs to be addressed. It is beneficial for individual professionals, educators, and employers to know exactly what requirements exist today. Whether certification comes through the NCA or ASCP or both, laboratory professionals need to continually maintain excellence.

The National Certification Agency for Laboratory Personnel, Inc. was founded in 1978. It is a voluntary, non-profit, non-governmental organization that conducts certification of medical laboratory professionals. The NCA provides national peer-developed and peer-administered examinations for laboratory personnel.

The ASCP Board of Registry was founded in 1928 by the American Society for Clinical Pathology. Over 415,000 individuals have been certified. The Board of Governors of the ASCP Board of Registry has 21 members, including five pathologists, five medical technologists, nine representatives from participating specialty societies, and two public members.

Although recertification through the NCA has required continuing education or re-examination almost since its inception, the ASCP Board of Registry has now just recently begun a Certification Maintenance Program (CMP). Individuals who pass the entry-level certification examinations effective January 1, 2004 are required to participate in the Certification Maintenance Program. Individuals certified in the specialist and diplomate categories effective January 1, 2006 are required to participate in the CMP. If you took the ASCP certification examination before 2004, participation in CMP is optional. If you complete the CMP you may use the initials "CM" in superscript after your certification designation, i.e. MT(ASCP)^{CM}. Recertification occurs every three years for both the NCA and the ASCP CMP.

So what is required for each certifying agency?

NCA:

Phlebotomists must submit 1.8 CEU (18 hours) over the most recent three years. All other categories must submit 3.6 CEU (36 hours). CEU's may be earned from:

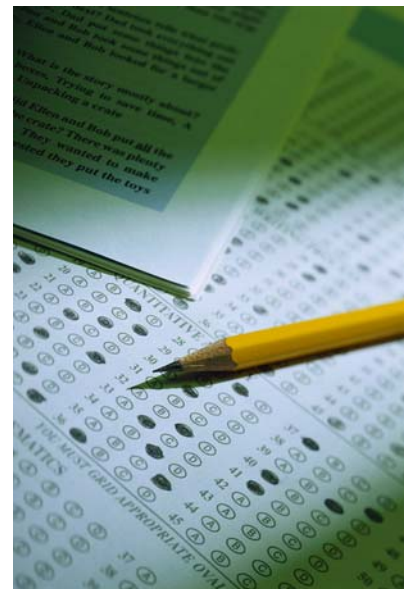
- College or university coursework
- Teaching activities
- Papers, publications, books and exhibits (paper or poster sessions)
- Leadership and other activities
- CE Activities without Approved Sponsorship

Details on the NCA recertification process can be found at

<http://www.nca-info.org/professionals/recertify.asp>

Details on calculating acceptable CEU's can be found at

<http://www.nca-info.org/professionals/ceu.asp>



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ASCP Certification Maintenance Program:

Phlebotomists must submit 9 points and all other categories must submit 36 points over the most recent three years. For MT's and MLT's the point distribution must include 1 point in safety, 2 points in each for blood banking, chemistry, hematology, and microbiology, and the remaining points in area(s) of lab specialty, immunology, molecular diagnostics, management, education or other related laboratory areas of interest. 1 CMP point = 1 Contact Hour = 1 CMLE Credit. CMP points may be earned from:

- Formal Continuing education courses
- Employer offered courses
- College/University coursework
- Teleconferences, subscription or online self-instructional courses (ACCME, CMLE, ACCENT, PACE or other professional society credits)
- Completion of advanced ASCP certification or qualification
- Competence Assessment by employer with ASCP/BOR Employer Assessment Form
- Research and preparation for presenting a workshop or course
- Authoring journal articles for peer-reviewed publications
- Authoring a book
- Editing a book
- Doctoral dissertation
- Master's thesis
- Presenting posters/exhibits
- Serving on examination committees
- Serving on committees/boards related to the profession
- Role of on-site inspector for laboratory accreditation or training program accreditation



Details on the Certification Maintenance Program can be found at:

<http://www.ascp.org/certification/CMP/>

Details on CMP Point Allocation can be found at:

http://www.ascp.org/Certification/CMP/pdf/cmp_booklet.pdf

In light of these requirements, the value of P.A.C.E. approved continuing education activities provided by ASCLS-IA increases dramatically. If you have a continuing education activity that can be shared, perhaps you have a good case study to write up, please contact the ASCLS-IA president or P.A.C.E representative for information on accrediting your continuing education activity and publishing in the NewsScope.

Scholarships Available Through the Iowa Medical Technology Scholarship Fund

The Iowa Medical Technology Scholarship Fund (IMTSF) was formed in 1958 for the purpose of promoting and supporting the education of medical technology students at all levels. Originally funded by the Iowa Association for Pathologists and the Iowa Society of Medical Technology, IMTSF received a substantial bequest by Miss Pearl Spanswick. In 2004, IACLS donated a substantial fund to honor the career of Marian Schwabbaur. Each year, IMTSF awards scholarships to qualifying students.

Current scholarships are available for Medical Technology Training, Medical Laboratory Technician Training, and graduate course work in a laboratory related field. The number of scholarships available will depend on the applicant response and availability of funds.

Any Iowa resident who has been accepted in an accredited Iowa program for Medical Technology (MT) or for Medical Laboratory Technology (MLT) is eligible to apply. All applicants must have a minimum grade point of 2.5 or be in the top 25% of his/her high school graduating class.

Applications and accompanying material **must** be post-marked no later than **March 31, 2008**. **Applications and accompanying material will not be considered for a scholarship if the deadline date is not met.**

Eligibility will be determined by the following:

Grade Point Average - each applicant must include his/her most recent **official transcript** with the scholarship application.

Essay - each application must include a one page essay on why a laboratory career was selected and what he/she expects to accomplish in the field.

References - send a reference form to each selected reference.

Scholarship award winners will be announced at the IACLS Spring Meeting.

For application forms, please notify :

Gayle Culbertson
2514 53rd Street
Des Moines, IA 50310
Phone: 515-241-6859

Completed Applications should be sent to:

IMTSF Scholarship Committee
c/o Linda Blair
2919 36th St.
Des Moines, IA 50310

Getting Youth Involved

“Future leaders are like a flower in that one must cultivate, tend to, and provide them with the nourishment they need to grow.”

One of the most prominent portions of the ASCLS strategic plan is succession planning. Leaders of the society believe in the concept that any organization is only one generation away from extinction. This concept is one that is too familiar to ASCLS at this point in its history. A major concern that many states continually report is that they have a lack of young individuals ready to take leadership or just a lack of young members joining their ranks.

As First Year Professional Director, I am often asked how to help alleviate this concern. Unfortunately, I have no magic answer that can work across the entire society. For succession planning to be successful and for new leaders to develop a society must not necessarily have a large number of new professionals, but rather each society must mentor whatever size group they have. ASCLS as a whole has recognized this fact by starting the leadership academy. Unfortunately the size limitations of such an endeavor cannot completely address the lack of new leaders. To that end, if you are a society suffering from the concern of new leaders not stepping to the plate, please use the following recommendation as a guide that can hopefully solve your concern.

If you were placed into the position you hold now without any idea of what it was or what it entailed would you feel comfortable? I bet not, but if the answer is yes then you don't mind the process of trial and error. Realize though that many people don't feel comfortable learning by trial and error and therefore would like some guidance. **MENTORING IS THE KEY**, by letting someone be a member or vice chair of a committee in your state you can set them up with seasoned members who can show them the ropes. After a year or two, when their confidence is up, feel free to put them in a committee chair position. Once they learn how to lead a committee they will be ready to start leading the state society as a whole. This does not mean that you can throw them into the role of president-elect, but it does mean give them a try at being secretary/ treasurer. Before you know it you will have someone ready to take over as president-elect within a few years.

By following this strategy you will have new individuals within the society well prepared to take over as leaders of the state. While simply dropping a new graduate into the role of president-elect does put a new person into the position, does it truly create a successful succession planning, in all honesty, it doesn't. That isn't to say that a new graduate couldn't actually perform the duties required, but it will be a much more taxing journey on their part. This in the end may burn them out too soon and lose a person who is a potential leader. If you follow a strategy like this with the group you have (and yes that means identifying and touching base with these members and bringing them in). If you have questions contact me at kylbernard@aol.com and I can connect you with societies who have been successful at mentoring future leaders.

Thanks,

Kyle Riding

ASCLS First Year Professional Director

2007-2008

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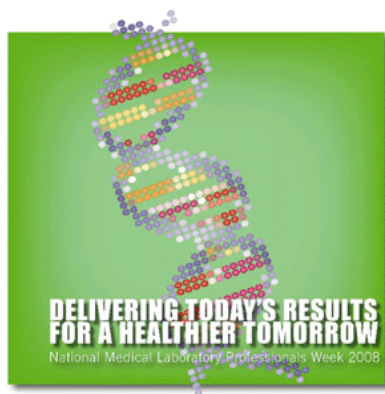
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National Medical Laboratory Professionals Week is just around the corner.
Please share your stories and pictures with us to include in our next NewsScope.
Stories and pictures can be emailed to mparekh@clarkehosp.org.
Make it a great week!

Delivering Today's Results for a Healthier Tomorrow...



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