

# NewsScope



## Great Plains Regional Lab Expo Great Success

The 2009 Great Plains Regional Lab Expo is in the history books! The Mid-America Center in Council Bluffs, Iowa, hosted a 4 state collaborative effort providing a resounding Spring Meeting. Regional ASCLS associations from Iowa, Nebraska, Missouri, and Kansas, along with ASCP put their collective heads together and brought to the Midwest terrific continuing education sessions, a spectacular vendor fair and evening entertainment galore. We were honored to have as the Keynote Speaker our very own ASCLS Executive Director Elissa Passiment with us from Washington, D.C. Elissa is always a delight to listen to and her address on the future of the laboratory and how we as laboratorians make a difference in every aspect of quality patient care reminded us of who we are and how big of an impact we make. The 4 states were able to take care of business as we had time for our annual business meetings. Our 3 days were filled with learning, learning, and more learning, but also with a bit of socializing. An awards ceremony was held during lunch on Wednesday and members were honored for their hard work done in their respective states. We were also treated to an expanded vendor fair lasting from Wednesday to Friday giving us a chance to view, play, and hopefully not break, all of the new technology available from different vendors across the nation. A big thank you to the vendors for taking the time to make this aspect of our meeting a huge success. We weren't without a bit of fun as one evening we were treated to a version of "Name that Tune" with many of us taking our turns as contestants in a game show, guessing songs from various questions and musical clips. There was absolutely NO cheating from the audience (wink wink) and we all came away winners! The real winners were the ones who were lucky enough for a George Clooney sighting! He was in the city filming a movie and some were fortunate enough to catch a glimpse of this cutie! Back to earth and at the end of our expo, ASCLS Past-President Rick Panning from Minnesota gave our closing address. He spoke of how all organizations can work together to form a strong professional base to allow us to bring our quality work to the medical community. We thank those who

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Elissa Passiment, ASCLS Executive Director  
2009 Great Plains Lab Expo Keynote  
Speaker



worked tirelessly to bring us all together for such a great time and hope we can do this again in the future!





## From the President



It is with great honor and excitement that I have this opportunity to introduce myself as your 2009-2010 President of ASCLS-IA. As I look forward to the next year, I want to take a moment to first thank Sheila Pitts, Past President for her great guidance to ASCLS-IA and the fabulous mentor she has been to me as President-Elect and the rest of the ASCLS-IA Board. Secondly, I want to thank all the members who have volunteered their time, expertise, and energy to help build our state society and profession; from planning the annual spring meeting, to committee chairs, and even the simple representation in your lab to recruit new members --- I thank each of you!

In addition to our annual charge of recruitment and retention of members; one new charge for this year is to focus on succession planning, Each year we are challenged as a professional society to find future leaders; for Iowa we have been very fortunate that we have a great history of leadership while many other state societies struggle and even cease to exist. If you have ever had the desire to lead (or even a little curious) please contact me at [president@ascls-ia.org](mailto:president@ascls-ia.org) or another member of the Board of Directors located in this Newsletter and on our website at [www.ascls-ia.org](http://www.ascls-ia.org). We can find a position in the society that can build your leadership skills!

Another charge this year is to be active! Grassroots political action is vital to healthcare reform and in particular for the laboratory profession. One way you can help with that reform contact your legislative representatives and have them support of H.R. 1452, Medicare Clinical Diagnostic Laboratory Fee Schedule Modernization Act of 2009. Check out Theresa Ortnier's great article in this issue about the Legislative Symposium that ASCLS-IA attended in March in Washington, DC. Our delegation with Clinical Laboratory Management Association (CLMA) Iowa was successful in having both Rep. Boswell and Rep. Latham support H.R. 1452 but we would love to see all of Iowa's representatives co-sponsor; however, that only happens when their constituents tell them to support it which means YOU!

Thank you again for this opportunity to lead our society this year and I look forward to another great year of accomplishments and support of our members.

*Kim Von Ahsen*

President, ASCLS-IA



LOOKING FOR SOMETHING TO DO?  
RENEW OR JOIN ASCLS AT  
[www.ascls.org](http://www.ascls.org)

Please keep your email address current on the website so we can keep you up-to-date!!



It's time to renew your 2009-10 ASCLS membership! It's time to "empower your professional life"!

Although the word "empower" seems to be a contemporary buzzword, the word *empower* is not new, having arisen in the mid-17th century with the legalistic meaning "to invest with authority, authorize." Now this 7-letter word has a more general recognized meaning of "enabling oneself to act strategically to succeed and to be actively engaged in areas of choice." As clinical laboratory science professionals we must be empowered in our profession and believe that we can live our professional lives beyond all barriers real and conceived. Together, united in and supported by ASCLS, as practicing professionals we are empowered through...

- Being informed of all that impacts or has the potential to impact how we practice our profession
- Being connected to clinical laboratory science professionals throughout our state, our region, and the nation
- Being able to expand our professional knowledge and skill sets through affordable continuing education, mentoring programs, and professional resources
- Having a voice and choice in the future direction of our profession

Every year when you make the decision to renew your ASCLS membership, you are making a professional statement about your core beliefs... "YOU are a true clinical laboratory science professional. YOU believe that what you do brings value to healthcare and the patients you serve. YOU know that your voice, your value, and your vision are important. YOU are committed to professional excellence through professional involvement."

Don't wait... Renew your ASCLS membership today to...

- Renew your professional spirit...***
- Renew your professional passion...***
- Renew your professional pride...***
- RENEW YOU!***

***IF AT FIRST YOU DON'T SUCCEED, SKYDIVING ISN'T FOR YOU!***

***Looking for a place to advertise a job opening? Be sure to contact the [ascls-ia.org](http://ascls-ia.org) webmaster. Let us help you spread the word about that perfect job and get results!!***

***[webmaster@ascls-ia.org](mailto:webmaster@ascls-ia.org)***

## THE NEW BUZZ WORD

By Theresa R. Ortner  
Government Affairs Chair

Believe or not the new buzz word on the Hill in Washington, D.C. is not stimulus, bailout or economy. It's focused solely on patients. Are you ready? The new buzz word to share with your friends, and be in the "know" is... wait for it... QUALITY.

Quality is the new buzz word in D.C. It's a new focus for them, but for us in our field it's been the buzz word forever. It's why we do what we do. We are constantly trying to improve our quality of service to improve our quality of care. Imagine our surprise when they started using our buzz word. I believe the best word to describe it would be flabbergasted, and encouraged because it set us up for the new buzz words for us: Fee Scheduling, and Title VII.

For once we were on the same page! I know truly amazing. Now onto to our new buzz words. Remember, last year we had the Olympics and laboratories scored a Gold medal by defeating Competitive bidding. Unlike the competitors in the Olympics we had to provide another solution after obtaining our gold medal.

Here's a brief recap of competitive bidding and why the Government thought it was wonderful. Competitive bidding was proposed because in D.C. when they think of labs they think of LabCorp and Quest the big name labs that actually turn a profit. To our amazement they thought 50-75% of all lab tests were performed at these companies. We were no longer looked at as providing a service; nope we were providing "equipment". Hence the push to make labs "bid" and win the "bid" in order to provide service to all Medicare Part B recipients. How many labs do you know that actually turn a profit? Profit? Community based, hospital based labs are lucky to just break even. Here was the deal: the Government would take away competitive bidding if we provided a better way to help patients. Our solution, let's fix fee scheduling.

Yes, folks unfortunately fee scheduling is broken, so broken that we are still getting reimbursed 1983 rates. Yes I said 1983! The government has not increased it since 1984. Instead it's one of the first things to get cut or frozen when it comes to the budget. 25 years that's a long time when it comes to cost. Here's a good example I can think of; I remember when I would go shopping with my grandfather and I would ask for a candy bar. Back then it was \$0.25, now its \$1.50- \$1.75. However the government has been getting by just paying that \$0.25 or less for the last 25 years. That's a lot of candy bars!

Let's think about it and do the math. Don't worry it won't be hard, I promise. Our services provide 75-80% of a patient diagnosis but in the scheme of things we get reimbursed <1% from the budget. Talk about bang for the buck! The problem is though that the money has to come from somewhere and its getting harder to come by.

The answer; H.R. 1452: Medicare Clinical Diagnostic Laboratory Fee Schedule Modernization Act of 2009. Here's the best part if the bill passes, we have input in costs. It's not all about what the government thinks we need, its about us knowing what we need. A committee will be formed that contains 21 members, 19 voting and 2 non-voting members. In the 19 voting members there will be a health economist, patients, doctors, non-physician providers, hospitals and us, laboratories! The best part the 2 non-voting members are the government members. Members from MedPAC. MedPAC is the Medical Payment Advisory Commission and the 2 members in the committee will be their Secretary and Chairman.

Now this will only happen if we push Congress to pass the bill and get it passed in the Senate. When we do all this it is still going to take time. The committee has up to 1 year and 3 months to reach a consensus and after they reach that it still needs to go back to committees in order to get passed in the hill. In the long run it will be well worth it.

Now for part 2 of the buzz words, personnel shortage. We all have experienced it and know it's happening and have been trying to do something about it for years. What's so different now... now we have the Stimulus package! Let's talk figures, \$200 million is suppose to go to Title VII of the Public Health Services Act. Notice I said suppose to, in past years we have been promised money but at the last moment... BOOM it's gone. We need to change this trend and request that money from the Stimulus package go to Title VII and must be reauthorized with new provisions stipulating that funding go to schools to keep our field thriving. Title VII Allied Health Programs can help prevent the closure of clinical education programs.

You may be wondering why Title VII is the other part of "quality". To ensure quality to all people we must have trained professionals working on the bench. Only then can we ensure the highest quality is met. After all having qualified personnel running tests effects us and those around us everyday.

Title VII is not the only option there is one other option and that is requesting that the government enhance the reauthorization level of the Workforce Investment Act under the Department of Labor. Did you know the Department of Labor stands to receive \$3.95 billion from the stimulus check? If not you do now and of that we would love to receive \$250 million to help our schools and programs. How do we do it? We request it, don't ask request. After all they request to be voted back into office each year, its time we do the same.

Let's help enhance the new buzz word on the hill. Let's ensure quality for all and request the government take action! How do we do it? By taking a little time and dropping our representatives a line. You can find the information you need on our website: [www.ascls-ia.org](http://www.ascls-ia.org) under government. If we don't stand up for us who will?



## Alpha Mu Tau Scholarship Recipient

One of our own has been notified that she has received a \$1,000 scholarship from the Alpha Mu Tau fraternity. Alpha Mu Tau is a nationally recognized fraternity within the ASCLS organization. It's purpose is the advancement of professionals in the clinical laboratory sciences. One of the prime activities of this fraternity is the granting of graduate and under-

graduate scholarships for clinical laboratory science students. To be eligible, you must fill out an application, be enrolled in an accredited program, and have a performance evaluation filled out by a supervisor. These forms and information can be found on the ascls.org website.

The winners are announced at the national meeting. Tara Sorenson has been honored to receive one of these scholar-

ships! Tara is a graduate of Pacific Lutheran University and recently moved to Iowa with her husband who is employed at Rockwell Collins in Cedar Rapids. Before starting the CLS program, Tara worked at the UHL in Coralville receiving and processing public health samples. Tara would like to work in a microbiology laboratory after graduation. Congratulations to Tara for this wonderful honor!

## HANGING UP THE LAB COAT



Don Johnson, a very active ASCLS member and lab director at the Audubon Community Hospital has retired from

his position to move forward in his quest of golfing and spending time with family! Don has been an active part in this organization and in his community. He is always willing to help fellow laboratories in need. Good luck, Don, and enjoy your new start!! Don't forget us!

## ANOTHER IOWAN BECOMES MEMBER OF LEADERSHIP ACADEMY

K. Lindsey Davenport Landry has been selected to participate in the 2009-2010 Leadership Academy. Leadership Academy was designed by ASCLS to prepare members for current and future leadership roles in the organization by providing a structured program of study of critical leadership topics. A year is spent developing these skills

by participating in 4 conference calls, attending Legislative Day in Washington D. C., and also the National meeting. There is homework involved and hours of interaction with other members from different states that have also been chosen for this special "team". Class size has gotten smaller with only 5 members being chosen this year from

hundreds that have applied. Lindsey has been involved with ASCLS most recently as our secretary, but in previous years has volunteered and been active since she was a student only a few short years ago. We wish Lindsey well in her new role and we look forward to watching her leadership skills evolve even more!!

**NEVER GO TO A DOCTOR WHOSE OFFICE PLANTS HAVE DIED**

## UPCOMING EVENTS AND DATES

Summer Board Meeting-regular board meeting with training for committees

Saturday, August 15, 2009 10:00a.m. to 5:00 pm  
Sunday, August 16, 2009 8:00a.m. to 12:00p.m. (only if we do not get all training done on Sat.) Location is Iowa Lutheran Hospital 700 E University Ave, Des Moines, IA. Signs will be posted as to which board room.

Fall Board Meeting

November 7th, 2009 Iowa Methodist Medical Center, Des Moines, Ia, 10:00a.m.

Winter Board Meeting

January 23rd, 2010, VAMC, Iowa City, Ia 10:00a.m.

Spring Meeting/Board Meeting

April 13-15th, 2010 Prairie Meadows , Altoona, Iowa.  
Board meeting April 13th, Holiday Inn Express, Altoona, IA., 6:00p.m.

**AND THE WINNER IS.....**

It is nice to be recognized by your peers for a job well done. The following recipients of this years host of awards given by ASCLS-IA get a round of applause for being recognized for going the extra mile in the laboratory profession. Those awards given but not pictured are the Omicron Sigma awardees:(state) Karen Campbell, Mick Williams, Judy Jackson, Vonnie Hinrichsen, and Lindsey Davenport-Landry:(regional) Sheila Pitts, Jan Frerichs, and Neil Kumor:(national) Theresa Ortner and Kim Von Ahsen. Key to the Future Awardees : Amy Frank and Vicki Siefers. Leadership Academy: Theresa Ortner and Kim Von Ahsen. IMTSF Scholarships of \$500 each were awarded to Levi Zarbano, Erica Martinez, and Emili Dibbs. We thank each and every one of you for working so hard to make such a difference! Be thinking ahead to next year for nominations of people you think worthy of recognition!



**Outstanding Support Staff awarded to Jessica Brandt by Pres. Sheila Pitts and Award Chair Jan Frerichs**



**Key to the Future Award and Student of the Year Award went to Rachel Kobernusz by Pres. Sheila Pitts and Award Chair Jan Frerichs**



**Mentor of the Year awarded to Karen Campbell by Pres. Sheila Pitts and Award Chair Jan Frerichs**

**Past President awarded to Jan Frerichs and President awarded to Sheila Pitts given to each other! Funny how that worked out!**



**Phlebotomist of the Year awarded to Bridget Obermeier given by her boss Don Johnson**



**Member of the Year awarded to Lindsey Davenport Landry By Pres. Sheila Pitts and Award Chair Jan Frerichs**



**Mick Williams with some of his fans, Pres. Sheila Pitts, Membership Chair Vonnie Hinrichsen, and Award Chair Jan Frerichs**

**For 45 years of dedication and outstanding service to our organization, the "Fabulous 45" Award was given to Mick Williams. He has been a leading force behind ASCLS-IA from the early years and has given tirelessly of himself in helping to maintain a high level of quality and professionalism within our organization! We thank Mick for the many hours he has given of himself and the endless stories he can share of just about anything!!**

## *2009-2010 BOARD MEMBERS*

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Let your fingers do the walking thru the internet! There is a huge world of information and useful tools available to help you with all aspects of your professional laboratory career at your fingertips! Take the time to cruise all the many different offerings these websites have listed! It will be a surprise to you what you will be able to find!!

GO TO

[WWW.ASCLS.ORG](http://WWW.ASCLS.ORG) or [WWW.ASCLS-IA.ORG](http://WWW.ASCLS-IA.ORG)

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