



# e – LABorate

MN Newsletter

October 2022



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## Message from Your President

**Charlotte Romain MS, MLS(ASCP), ASCLS-MN President**

For those who don't know me, my name Charlotte Romain, and I am the ASCLS-MN President. You may know my name from Clinical Laboratory Collaborative Meeting communications, as I have been the registration chair for the MN CLC for many years. I currently work in the microbiology lab at the VA Medical Center in Minneapolis. We are already starting off with a busy fall with ASCLS-MN. The first national board meeting was held September 25<sup>th</sup> and the National Legislative Symposium was September 26<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup>. Our Minnesota Government Affairs Chair, Donna Showers, has highlights from that meeting later in the newsletter. The ASCLS Region V Symposium was held September 29<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup> at the Mayo Health Event Center in Mankato. Two days of keynotes, breakouts, and vendor sessions made for lots of learning and networking opportunities.

The Metro area scientific assembly are working hard to put several CE events on the calendar. Check the continuing education section of the newsletter for details.

We also have a new Area Director in the Southeast area, Rachel Siddal. She is getting some CE events set up for the Rochester area! Look for a spotlight on her later in the newsletter!

I'm looking forward to a productive and fun year with ASCLS-MN. If you have questions or suggestions, please feel free to contact me at [marsh397@gmail.com](mailto:marsh397@gmail.com).

## UMN Medical Laboratory Sciences Celebrates 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary

**Donna Spannaus-Martin, PhD, MLS (ASCP)cm**

In 1922, the University of Minnesota began offering courses in medical laboratory at that time known as medical technology. One hundred years later, it has become the oldest MLS baccalaureate degree granting program in the United States. Because the first graduating class occurred in 1923, the UMN program is making this a year-long celebration. The kick-off event was held at the Alumni Banquet this past April at the McNamara Alumni Center. The Program was delighted that former Program Directors Drs. Karen Karni and Dr. Janice Conway-Klaassen were able to attend.



Information about the events planned for the celebration can be found at <https://www.alliedhealth.umn.edu/mls/program-overview/100-years>. Events include a recreation of a presentation of the program history given by Verna Rausch in 1984, free continuing education sessions every month on a variety of MLS topics, and some virtual Happy Hours. The Grand Finale of the celebration will be held when the 2023 Alumni Banquet is held at Huntington Bank Stadium on April 29th. Alumni of the program are asked to share their memories of their time in the MT/CLS/MLS program using the "Share Your MLS Story" at the bottom of the 100<sup>th</sup> 0422017877 Anniversary web site.

## Call for Volunteers

We have several positions open both on the ASCLS-MN Board and Committees. Contact anyone on the board if you are interested in helping this year!

[www.asclsmn.org](http://www.asclsmn.org)

- Government Affairs Committee
- Newsletter Editor
- Developing Profession (formerly Student Forum Chair)
- Area Directors
- Southwest
- Northeast
- Northwest/Central

[Link to Job Descriptions](#)



## 2022 Legislative Symposium

**Donna Showers MLS, MS, FACHE, Government Affairs Chair**

On September 26, nearly 120 medical laboratory professionals from six organizations joined together in Alexandria, Virginia, and virtually for the 2022 Laboratory Legislative Symposium. Members from ASCLS, the American Society for Clinical Pathology (ASCP), Association of Genetic Technologists (AGT), American Medical Technologists (AMT), National Society for Histotechnology (NSH), and the Philippine Association of Medical Technologists-USA (PAMET-USA) learned about the legislative issues impacting medical laboratories and how “Labvocates” can make their voices heard on Capitol Hill. The audience learned tips and tricks for successfully interacting with members of congress including practical application through role play practice. Props to the brave souls who volunteered to role play in front of the group!

The presenters included Jim Flanigan (EVP-ASCLS) and Patrick Cooney (President -The Federal Group, Inc.) as well as speakers from Lab Workforce Steering Committee, NILA, ASCP, ACLA, and other invited guests.

The main topics included:

- Washington Updates
- Levers of influence with congress
- Saving Access to Laboratory Services Act (SALSA)
- Laboratory Workforce
- Shortages
- Raising awareness for the profession
- Nomenclature standardization - Medical Laboratory Scientist (MLS) – “I am MLS” Challenge
- Instructions for working with congressional offices
- CMS proposed rule for CLIA nursing and lab testing
- Verifying Accurate Leading-edge IVCT Development (VALID) Act



## 2022 Legislative Symposium, continued



The levers of influence within government and advocacy can be described as a three-legged stool: 1) coalition building, 2) grassroots action, and 3) shoe leather lobbying. The audience was encouraged to get to know their local legislators and to recognize that they are not out of reach – legislators want to talk to their constituents.

We are at the tail end of the 117th congress (2021-2022). Elections will be held this fall and then a new congress will begin in January 2023. A total of 470 seats in the U.S. Congress (35 of 100 Senate seats and all 435 House seats) are up for election on November 8. There will be a “Lame Duck” session (comprised of outgoing elected officials whose successors have already been elected or will be soon) after November elections, which may be the best opportunity to complete work on various lab related policy items. Patrick Cooney stated that we were in DC at a great time!

Cooney went on to say that this is a difficult time for bipartisan efforts – hearings on the Jan 6th insurrection, Supreme Court rulings are dividing the nation, the conflict in Ukraine, and mid-term elections in November. But even in this environment, many bipartisan efforts are happening. Our lab issues are, indeed, bipartisan.

Federal Lab issues include:

- Medicare Part B Lab Fee Schedule
- VALID act and LDTs
- Lab Workforce Shortages
- Supply Chain Concerns
- Prior Authorization reform for Medicare Advantage Plans

### **Saving Access to Laboratory Services Act (SALSA)**

On June 22, 2022, legislation was introduced in Congress to update the laboratory reimbursement reporting requirements under the Protecting Access to Medicare Act (PAMA); The Saving Access to Laboratory Services Act (SALSA) (S.4449/H.R.8188). SALSA would require the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) to use a statistically representative sample of rates from the laboratory market to determine Medicare's Clinical Laboratory Fee Schedule (CLFS) and would increase the time between reporting periods from three to four years. The call to action when visiting Capitol Hill was to ask Congress to show support for the laboratory community and Medicare patients by cosponsoring SALSA and to urge House and Senate leaders to take up SALSA before the end of the year as part of broader Medicare legislation.

### **Clinical Laboratory Workforce**

**BIO Preparedness Workforce Act** (H.R.5602/S.1018, introduced by Rep. Trahan (D-MA) and Senator Tammy Baldwin (D-WI) - This bill makes clinical laboratory technologists and technicians eligible for student loan repayment in exchange for up to 3 years of service in an underserved area in relation to bio preparedness and infectious disease. Components of this Act are included in the Prepare for and Respond to Existing Viruses, Emerging New Threats, and Pandemics Act” or the “PREVENT Pandemics Act” (S.3799). This bill was marked up in March of 2022 but has not seen further action.

## 2022 Legislative Symposium, continued

### **Medical Laboratory Personnel Shortage Relief Act**

This bill would create a grant program to assist schools of allied health to recruit necessary faculty and provide clinical training necessary to enter the profession. The bill would also provide loan repayment for clinical laboratory professionals in exchange for service in medically underserved communities.

The call to action when visiting the Hill was to ask Congress to:

1. Establish a program of scholarships and loan repayment, similar but distinct from the National Health Service Corp, to alleviate the shortage of clinical laboratory personnel.
2. Establish a federal grant program to assist allied health schools in recruiting and retaining clinical laboratory students to improve the availability of these professionals throughout the U.S.

### **CMS Proposed Rule for CLIA Nursing and Lab Testing**

This topic was discussed but did not have a call to action for Capitol Hill visits. CMS is collecting and considering comments from the industry (approximately 20,000 comments have been sent). Both laboratory and nursing advocacy groups are weighing in on this topic. Also, to be determined is whether a Doctorate in Clinical Laboratory Science (DCLS) is adequate for a director of a high complexity testing.

## Member Spotlight

My name is Rachel Siddall and I am both honored and excited to be the Southeast Area Region Director this year!

My laboratory career started at Ferris State University in Big Rapids, MI where I received my MLS degree. I interned at the University of Michigan and worked in their microbiology lab after graduation. I spent a summer during undergrad as a student in a Mayo Clinic laboratory and knew I wanted to move to Rochester. I currently work in Bacteriology at the Mayo Clinic and am working on my Doctorate of Clinical Laboratory Science (DCLS) at Rutgers University.

My first role in ASCLS was as Developing Professional Director where I attended the annual meeting in Louisville, KY and lead the Developing Professional Forum. This is my second year as a region director for ASCLS-MN.



## Member Spotlight - continued

My goal for the year is to have more in-person interactions to strengthen relationships in our society after the COVID-19 lockdowns. Our profession has faced many challenges during the past few years, but our community remains strong. I'm looking forward to meeting all of you soon.

Please reach out to me if you have ideas or would like to get involved!  
[rachellsiddall@gmail.com](mailto:rachellsiddall@gmail.com)

## Continuing Education Opportunity

### **ASCLS-MN Brews for CEU's**

November 14, 6 -7:30 PM  
Location: The Lab – Brewery  
767 N Eustis St Suite 115  
St. Paul, MN 55114

### **January Saturday Morning Breakfast and CEUs**

January 21<sup>st</sup>, 8am – 12pm TENTATIVE  
More information to follow  
Location: Abbott Northwestern Hospital  
3 speakers

### **February CEU Opportunity in Rochester**

Date and details to follow

## Leadership Academy

ASCLS Region V has a wonderful opportunity that is available to any ASCLS member from Region V. The Leadership Academy provides guidance, education, and resources at a regional level to prepare ASCLS members for leadership roles in ASCLS and within the profession.

There is no charge to participate in the Region V Leadership Academy program for members from Region V, however, travel and meeting registration costs should be considered when applying. The host state societies do assist their participants with expenses.

The Academy is a 12-month program running from October to October and covering topics including:

★ History of ASCLS ★ Leadership and communication styles ★ Goals and strategic planning ★ Organization skills and time management ★ Conflict management ★ Conducting successful meetings ★ Professional advocacy ★ Recruitment strategies

P.A.C.E™ continuing education credits will be awarded for each session completed. The Leadership Academy is an opportunity to pursue leadership, professionalism, management, and self-knowledge. For more information visit <https://www.asclsmn.org/region-v-leadership-academy>

## Membership Development

We are in the midst of our membership drive! If you have not already renewed your membership, please go to [members.ascls.org](http://members.ascls.org) and renew today. If you have questions about membership or are having problems, please email Charlotte Romain at the email listed at the end of the newsletter.

Current membership: **175**

Emeritus – **9**

Ascending Professional – **17**

Developing Professional – **53**

Professional – **84**

Sustaining Members - **10**

Community/Honorary – **2**

### OPEN POSITIONS!

**We are currently looking for Area Directors for the Southwest, Northeast, and Northwest/Central Areas.**

**We are also looking for a newsletter editor and a Government Affairs Chair**

For More Information Visit:

<https://www.asclsmn.org/>

<http://www.regionvascls.online/>

[www.ascls.org](http://www.ascls.org)

[facebook.com/ascls.mn](https://facebook.com/ascls.mn)

## A Word from the Editor

### Charlotte Romain/ASCLS-MN President

What would you like to see in the next ASCLS-MN Newsletter? If you have any comments, suggestions, or would like to contribute an article to the newsletter, please email me at [marsh397@gmail.com](mailto:marsh397@gmail.com)

