

Annual Spring Meeting
Martha Smith, MPA, MT(ASCP)

It was no 'Fool's Day' this past April 1! Nineteen programs for over 125 registrants covering topics from "Sex in the State" and DNA Chips to Managing Your Career and "Flow Cytometry: A Very Cool Technique" were presented at the Sheraton in Woodbridge. It was a cold, rainy day but the 170 registrants, industry representatives, speakers, sponsors, and employment exchange participants covered the hot topics in laboratory medicine today. These are just a few very brief overviews of some of the sessions presented.

Sue Mikorski from the NJ Department of Health & Senior Services gave an update on Bio-terrorism preparedness. Do you know about the Laboratory Response Network or LRN? Do you know that hospital and reference labs are the Sentinel Labs of our state? Sentinel labs rule out the three categories of bio-terrorism agents; identify Salmonella, E. Coli 157H7, Shigella, Vibrio, and Cryptosporidium; refer isolates and specimens for confirmatory testing to the NJDHSS-PHEL and CDC; and communicate with the NJDHSS, internal infection control, and local health authorities. Sentinel Labs are the base of the LRN pyramid with confirmatory labs the next level up and national labs at the top. According to Ms. Mikorski, all sentinel lab staff need to have a heightened safety awareness, maintain contact phone numbers, incorporate the CDC BT procedures into our SOPs, package and ship safely following IATA regulations, and use the Communicable Disease Reporting Service (CDRS) for all communicable diseases.

Ever heard of 'LEAN Thinking' and its application in laboratory medicine? Who out there isn't facing staffing issues or space constraints or increased demand for more tests with faster than ever turn around times?

Ortho Clinical Diagnostics has a method called Process Excellence (PEX) which was enthusiastically presented by Maria Foster, the National Director for Ortho's ValuMetrix Services. The PEX method includes LEAN Thinking, Six Sigma, and Design Excellence to continually improve capacity, customer satisfaction, employee satisfaction, profitability, and reduce errors. Implementing LEAN establishes standard work and performance, creates a clean and organized work environment, improves employee attitudes, and prepares the organization for any future renovations.

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No fooling around for the registrants attending the NJSCLS Spring Seminar held on April 1, 2004

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Nadine Fydryszewski

It has been a very busy Spring for NJSCLS! Our annual Spring Seminar and House of Delegates Meeting held on April 1 was a huge success. It featured excellent nationally renowned speakers, and an Exhibit/Employment Exchange Expo with over 20 industry and hospital, and university representatives present. It was a day filled with many opportunities for continuing education in all disciplines of laboratory medicine, and networking with colleagues and friends.

The students from across the state have gathered for educational offering at two Student Forum sessions held in March and May, as well as special sessions at the Spring Seminar. The students coordinated the raffle for the Children's Miracle Network Charity and raised a record amount to give to this worthy charity – congratulations to the students for their collaboration and successful venture!

The NJSCLS leadership attended the ASCLS Region II meeting in April. At this meeting the Region II Director, Dr. MaryAnn McLane, presented on advocacy for our profession. She stressed the need for us to “put a face with the name”. How often do we refer to ourselves as “the lab”? How often does someone else, another health care provider, the public, the press, refer to us as “the lab”? “The Lab” is an inanimate object. It is a place! We are thinking, educated, problem solving professionals who perform vital work in providing data for laboratory diagnosis that is essential for physicians, nurses and other health care providers to make diagnosis and treat patients. We are not “the lab”, we are clinical laboratory scientists who perform our analysis in a location called “the lab”.

Dr. McLane encouraged all of us, and challenged us as a Region, to set a goal this year of “putting a face to the name”. She urged us to be advocates of our profession and the importance of laboratory diagnosis to patients and the public at large by reaching out to the public. Dr. McLane has prepared a power point presentation that she will share with the states in the Region to use as a template to go out to the public to discuss laboratory testing. She has presented at local senior citizens groups, nursing homes, etc on “What does my lab tests mean?” She urged us to take part in local career fairs, visiting elementary and secondary schools to give a short presentation on some aspect of laboratory medicine, do a “show and tell” for them with a microscope and some great parasite slides, gram stains, blood slides etc. As the new leadership of NJSCLS prepares for the next fiscal year, we will be developing ways to accomplish this goal within our state. If you are interested in taking part in the planning process or wish to be a presenter in your geographical area of NJ, please contact Pres. Elect Susan Whittier who will be coordinating, with the newly elected NJSCLS leadership, next year's strategic plan.

Another important issues brought to the table at the Region II meeting is direct access testing. Though we in NJ do not have direct access testing at this time, it is becoming legally available in several states. Direct Access Testing will be a major issue under discussion at the National ASCLS Meeting/House of Delegates in July. A national position paper will be presented for approval at the meeting. The NJ delegation will be informed of this issue and discussion will take place at the NJSCLS Leadership Workshop in June, prior to going to the national meeting.

The annual Leadership Workshop is scheduled for June 19. It is at this meeting, that plans are formalized for the next fiscal year. If you are interested in attending this meeting, please contact Sue Whittier.

As you can see, we have been very busy over the last few months, and have several challenges set before us as your representative leadership and as a profession. Please consider becoming active in your professional society. It is a rewarding experience to take part in the activities that shape our state and our profession. We have several tasks force, including the licensure task force, that require additional volunteers in order to accomplish their goals. If you are interested in participating in any capacity, please contact us. Visit our WEB site for contact information.

The annual ASCLS Legislative Symposium was held in Washington, D.C. on March 22 and 23. The symposium was a two-day event that included legislative update sessions, and lobbying sessions, followed by a day of lobbying on Capitol Hill. The symposium was attended by 89 participants representing 39 states. Elaine Keohane, and Jeryl Bischoff represented NJSCLS at the symposium along with Elissa Passiment.

The first day of the symposium consists of educational session on legislative issues, including ASCLS and CLMA positions on competitive bidding, personnel shortage, reimbursement issues, and Medicare reform. A workshop entitled "A Guide to Lobbying" was presented to prepare attendees to meet with their representatives, learn techniques to communicate with government representatives, and ways to effectively discuss issues with their staff. The workshop included role playing to provide opportunities to participants for coaching and practicing for the Capitol Hill visit to take place the second day.

Prior to attending the symposium, NJSCLS representatives, with the assistance of Elissa Passiment and Scott Aikey, arranged appointments with legislative aides representing their districts in New Jersey. On March 23, 2004, Elissa Passiment, Elaine Keohane and Jeryl Bischoff joined other ASCLS and CLMA members on Capital Hill to discuss laboratory issues with NJ representatives. The delegation met with staff members of Senators Corzine and Lautenberg, and Congressmen Ferguson, Frelinghuysen and Saxton. Each meeting lasted around 20 minutes, and informational materials or "leave behinds" were given to each aide.

Key issues discussed at the meetings on Capital Hill included competitive bidding for laboratory services. Competitive Bidding would likely result in multiple complex fee schedules. It could cause difficulty in referring testing and increase the costs for laboratory claims. There would be a strong incentive for laboratories to submit "low ball" bids to obtain contracts.

Laboratory services would be operating without the resources necessary to assure high quality testing, and physicians could be restricted to specific laboratories for their patient's medical laboratory testing services. The members were asked to appoint an Oversight Committee of Laboratorians to give technical oversight and advice in this area.

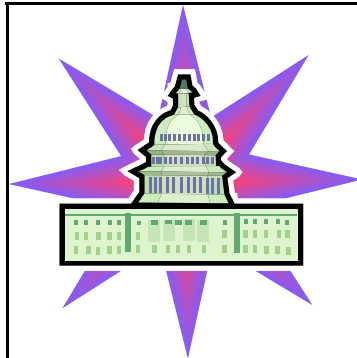
The government representatives were asked to support bill HR 623 "The Medical Laboratory Personnel Shortage Act of 2003" and AHRA "The Allied Health Reinvestment Act". Both bills offer a way to provide funding for education and training of Allied Health Professionals via scholarships and grants.

The final issue discussed was for support of the "Medicare Laboratory Services Access Act of 2003" HR

883. This act would raise the current Medicare Specimen Collection fee from \$3.00, which was established in 1984, to \$5.42.

All participants completed post symposium worksheets that were sent to ASCLS national office. The ASCLS lobbyist, Don Lavanty, will compile the information for a formal report. NJSCLS will follow-up, with Jeryl and Elaine contacting the aides to inquire about feedback from the Senators and Congressman.

The symposium was very successful. State legislators were provided with a real face and information about how these issues personally affect all their constituents and the importance of these issues. You can make a difference! Please consider representing your district next year at the Legislative Symposium.



NJSCLS has a new Webmaster!

Yes folks, it's true...
NJSCLS has a new Web Master!!
Lets give a warm
welcome to Mr. Keith Moureaux,
Coordinator at Morristown Memorial Hospital.
Mr. Moureaux has offered his services to help
maintain our Website.



www.nj.ascls.org

NJSCLS NAME CHANGE

Nadine Fydryszewski, MS, CLS(NCA), MT(ASCP)

Our national organization, American Society for Clinical Laboratory Science (ASCLS), has asked the constituent state societies to consider a name change that would feature the national organization, and standardize the name of the state affiliates. ASCLS has asked the states to consider a name change that reflects both the national organization and the state affiliate. With so many professional organizations in the laboratory arena, it is thought that "name and brand recognition" with the national organization would be better for our membership recruitment and in our legislative efforts, in that it is clearly linked to the larger national organization. Our present name "New Jersey Society for Clinical Laboratory Science (NJSCLS)" does not reflect our affiliation with the national organization. Several states have made this name change, and others are considering the change for vote at their state meetings within the year.

For New Jersey, the name under consideration is:

ASCLS - New Jersey

A survey was distributed to all attendees at the 2004 Spring Seminar and the issue was discussed at the 2004 Spring House of Delegates Meeting. The consensus was favorable. There was some discussion as to the cost of the name change and what it would entail. The By-Laws Committee will be gathering the information for a change in incorporation within New Jersey, and the basic cost for a re-design of our logo, new stationary and changes on the banking documents. This item will be brought forward to the membership for vote at the 2004 Fall Seminar/House of Delegates Meeting. As per our By-Laws, notification to the membership of any major change in the By-Laws, such as a name change, must be presented 120 days prior to the House of Delegates Meeting. This announcement in the Analyzer will serve as notification to the membership. If you have any questions or comments, please feel free to contact Pres. Nadine Fydryszewski at fydrisna@umdnj.edu or Pres. Elect Susan Whittier at Swhittier@meridianhealth.com

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Annual Spring Seminar

Lauren Smith, an Applications Specialist with Chrono-Log Corporation, provided a very interesting hour on platelet function and measurement. Her talk featured the various platelet counting methods and answered the whys about the importance of the lower limits of platelet count methods. She introduced the immunoplatelet count and talked about when such a count should be performed.

Lowering trigger points for platelet transfusion in an effort to reduce the cost burdens of obtaining platelet units for transfusion and lower the clinical risks involved with all blood & blood product transfusions are some of the goals of utilizing the immunoplatelet count along with impedance or optical platelet counts.



Keep a look out for information coming soon about the NJSCLS Fall Seminar and be sure to attend our next year's Spring Meeting. Bring a colleague with you – there's always something new and exciting happening in our chosen profession and at the NJCLS.



Board Meetings are open to all members!

For more details, directions and future brochures
Visit www.nj.ascls.org

NJSCLS Student Forum Take Active Part In Spring Seminar

Francis Wesley Estanislao- Student Forum Co-Rep

The NJSCLS student co-representatives, Wesley Estanislao and Lourdes Ortega, and the student forum committee played an active part in the annual NJSCLS Spring Seminar. The forum had two major responsibilities at the seminar, to organize the annual fund raising raffle for Children's Miracle Network (CMN) and plan the student educational sessions offered at the seminar.

The student co-representatives and the student forum committee, with the aid of several volunteer students from across the state, started the morning by selling tickets for the raffle as well as networking with participants. The CMN is the charity that has been selected by ASCLS for the national organization and state affiliates to support. Each year, NJSCLS Student Forum organizes the fund raising event in New Jersey. This year the forum raised a record-breaking amount - \$475.00! This was more than double the amount of money raised last year. Two Lennox China pieces were awarded during the drawing at the House of Delegates Meeting. The student forum extends a sincere "Thank You" to all the participants who generously supported their fund raising efforts on behalf of CMN.

Two exciting education sessions were planned by the forum, which focused on the educational and professional needs of the students. Mr. R. Scott LaNeve, Marketing Vice President of Quest Diagnostics facilitated the first session entitled "Managing Your Career."

He explained how to become a better career manager and discussed that making a career ladder is a useful tool to know if you are moving forward or backward in your career. Mr. Edward J. Peterson, Jr., MBA, MT (ASCP), Administrative Director of Health Facility Planning Shore Memorial Hospital facilitated the second session entitled "The Do's and Don'ts of Resumes and Interviews." He explained that making an eye catching, factual and accurate resume is not just what you need to land the job but making a good impression on an interview will also increase your chances of employment.

The presentations included a lively question and answer session with the students and presenters. The presentations were very informative and the students were pleased that they could interact with each other and learn from these presentations before graduation and heading out into the work world.



Student Forum Committee members raising funds for the Children's Miracle Network

Congratulations to the following members elected to the NJSCLS Board of Directors at the Spring House of Delegates on April 1, 2004

Deborah Josko, MS, MLT(ASCP)M, SM, CLS(NCA)M

Jane O'Reilly, MEd, MT(ASCP)

Joe Quillamor, BSMT

Meena Rathee, MS, CLS(NCA), MT(ASCP)



Elaine Keohane, Ph.D., CLS(NCA)

In April 2002, the New Jersey Society for Clinical Laboratory Science (NJSCLS), the New Jersey Clinical Laboratory Management Association (NJCLMA) and the New Jersey Hospital Association (NJHA) sponsored a symposium to examine the clinical laboratory personnel shortage issue in New Jersey. Seventy-three attended the event including representatives from the administrative, educational, practice and regulatory settings. At the conclusion of the Symposium, the NJ Clinical Laboratory Personnel Shortage Task Force was formed consisting of administrators of hospital and independent clinical laboratories, laboratory supervisors and educators, human resources directors, and representatives from NJHA, the NJ State Department of Health and Senior Services and NJ Medicaid. The Task Force has been very active, meeting six times since June 2002. The Task Force was recently renamed the **Coalition for NJ Clinical Laboratory Personnel** due to the ongoing nature of its initiatives. The goals of the coalition are to 1) document and disseminate data on the supply and demand for clinical laboratory professionals in NJ, 2) promote awareness of the profession, and 3) assist NJ clinical laboratory education programs to recruit more students and remain viable.

In a collaborative effort, the coalition has worked very hard to begin to achieve these goals, with NJSCLS taking an active leadership role in the coalition. NJSCLS has been collecting data on NJ clinical laboratory educational programs and their graduates since 1998. Some highlights are as follows:

- There has been a 48.5% decrease in MLT and MT graduates during the period of 1998 to 2003.
- In 2003, NJ graduated only 26 MTs and 21 MLTs, and not all of these grads choose to work in hospitals after graduation.
- There are only 5 MT, 4 MLT, and 1 CT program active in the state; the only HT program in the state is planning to be inactive next year; low enrollment is a major reason for educational program closures.

A laboratory personnel survey was mailed to clinical laboratory managers of the 95 hospitals in New Jersey in Spring 2003 requesting data on the number and ages of their laboratory professionals in six different categories, as well as the number of vacancies and the time to fill vacancies at their facility. Some highlights of the survey results are as follows:

- Surveys received from 49 out of the 95 NJ hospitals; data on practitioner age included 2,004 NJ laboratory professionals, with approximately 62% of those being MTs.
- 49.1% of the practitioners represented in the survey were over 45 years of age; 13.8% were over 55 years of age; projecting those figures over the 95 hospitals in the State, it is likely that over 500 laboratorians in the current workforce will be over 65 in the next 10 years.
- Staffing pattern in the responding hospital labs showed a ratio of 3.4 MTs to 1 MLT
- An estimate of the overall vacancy rate for NJ hospital laboratory personnel is 13.6%.
- During the 3 month survey period, there were 49 full time and 52 part time vacancies for staff MTs, and 11 full time and 4 part time vacancies for supervisory MTs in the 49 responding hospitals. Projecting those figures to the 95 hospitals in the State, the actual number of MT vacancies could be over 200 full and part time positions.
- Projecting MLT vacancies across the 95 hospitals, there may be over 40 positions, but many of those are part time.
- Some lab managers indicated that they would hire a MLT to fill a vacant MT position if a qualified MT was not available.
- 70% of managers reported difficulty in filling MT generalist positions.
- In some hospitals, the time to fill a vacancy was as high as 52 weeks for MT, MLT, and HTL positions; 78 weeks for CT positions, and 104 weeks for HT positions.
- 43% of responding hospitals do not offer incentives for hiring laboratory personnel

To promote awareness of the profession, a new website, <http://www.LabScience.org>, was launched in May 2003. This site contains a description of clinical laboratory careers, employment and career advancement opportunities, NJ clinical laboratory education programs, available financial assistance, salary and labor statistics, links to other relevant sites, contacts for hospital tours, and information for science teachers about potential guest lecturers for their courses, and shadowing opportunities and science project mentors for their students. In addition, an attractive Power Point Presentation can be downloaded from the site. In Spring 2003, the New Jersey Hospital Association sent a letter about the site to the lead science teacher, lead guidance counselor and principal at all NJ high and middle schools to promote awareness of the profession and direct them to this website for additional information. There were **almost 10,000 hits** to the site from May to September 2003, with over 5,000 hits in May. Members of the coalition have also been planning and participating in a variety of local and regional career days throughout the State.

The coalition will continue to monitor and disseminate data on the supply and demand of laboratory personnel in NJ and will seek funding for projects that will attract more students into the field including marketing initiatives, new and innovative educational programming, student financial support, and other projects that promote awareness of the clinical laboratory professions.

NJSCLS's initiative in the coalition is an excellent example of your state organization's leadership at work for you! If you are interested in becoming active in the coalition as a member of the professional team working together to further the laboratory profession or have any question about the coalition, please contact Dr. Elaine Keohane at keohanem@umdnj.edu.



Spring House of Delegates Meeting Highlights! *Nadine Fydryszewski, MS, CLS(NCA), MT(ASCP)*



The Annual House of Delegates Meeting was held during luncheon at the NJSCLS Spring Seminar on April 1, 2004. President Nadine Fydryszewski, presided over the meeting. Distinguished guest and New Jersey NJSCLS member, Elissa Passiment, Exec Vice President of the American Society for Clinical Laboratory Science, addressed the members in opening remarks to the House. Pres. Fydryszewski delivered the State of the Society address, proving an overview of the goals set for the year and how the society has met those goals and objectives.

A highlight of the meeting was the awards and recognition ceremony. Susan Kusic was the recipient of the 2004 Clinical Laboratory Scientist of the Year Award. The Omicron Sigma Award is the ASCLS President's

Honor Role for outstanding service with nominations on a national, regional and state level. Pres. Fydryszewski recognized the following members for outstanding service to NJSCLS on a state level for 2003-2004: Elaine Keohane, Susan Kusic, Joseph Quillamor, Jeryl Bischoff, Christie Tragno, Martha Smith, Jodie Prestholdt and Meena Rathee. The Key To The Future Award is given in recognition to new members or newly active members who show promise, have demonstrated leadership skills, and recognizes their efforts to become involved in the leadership of the society. This year's recipients were Christie Tragno and Keith Moureaux. As is tradition at the NJSCLS Spring House, President Fydryszewski welcomed President Elect Susan Whittier as the

in-coming President, with the official ASCLS President's Pin.

Two issues were discussed at the House, licensure and the potential name change for NJSCLS. Licensure survey results conducted last year indicated an interest in gathering more information about the feasibility of pursuing licensure in New Jersey. A Task Force will be established to investigate all variables associated with this issue and report at the 2005 Spring House of Delegates.

The slate of delegates to represent New Jersey at the ASCLS National Meeting in July was presented, voted and approved. The NJSCLS Delegates to the national meeting are: Nadine Fydryszewski, Susan Whittier, Lourdes Ortega, Elaine Keohane, Edward Peterson and Deborah Josko.



New Jersey Society for Clinical Laboratory Science

NJSCLS

An Affiliate of the American Society for Clinical Laboratory

PMD #259
14 Easton Avenue
New Brunswick, NJ 08901-1918

We are on the WEB!
www.nj.ascls.org

WELCOME TO THE COLONY



Dawn Alfieri
Crystal Batte
Emad Boyles
Jean Lynch
Bryna Lynch Cook
Barbara Molina
Benardo Mucha
Luisa Ordonez
Umesh Rana
Rachelle Villahermosa
Cynthia Warner

THANK YOU!

I wish to thank everyone for the awards that were presented to me at the Spring Seminar. I was truly honored and extremely grateful. I am very proud to be a member of NJSCLS.
Sincerely,
Christie Tragno, MLT(ASCP)

Calendar of Events

- Event: **NJSCLS Leadership Meeting**
 Place: Nadine Fydryszewski's Home (See Leadership Roster for details)
 Date: June 19, 2004
 Time: 9:00 AM - 3:00 PM
- Event: **Fall Seminar**
 Place: TBA
 Date: October 13, 2004
 Time: 4:00 PM—9:00 PM



Board Meetings are open to all members!
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