



THE ANALYZER

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NJSCLS Board Member Discusses Medicare Reimbursement with Congressman Ferguson

NJSCLS Board Member, Jeryl Bischoff, CLS (NCA), MT(ASCP)H, participated in an Innovation Council Meeting with Congressman Michael Ferguson in September 2003 at Ortho Diagnostics, Raritan, NJ. Congressman Ferguson represents the 7th Congressional District in New Jersey and is a member of the House Energy and Commerce Committee and the Health Subcommittee. Innovation Council meetings are sponsored by the Advanced Medical Technology Association (AdvaMed), which is the medical technology industry's major trade association. Periodically during the year, AdvaMed hosts an Innovation Council with key members of congress to help educate congress about the medical technology industry and an array of public policy issues that impact their customers. At Council meetings there are approximately 10-15 representatives from industry, patient groups and customers. Ms. Bischoff was invited by Becton Dickinson Corporation's Director of Government Relations, Ted Jurachek, to present a brief overview of the issues affecting medical technology and the healthcare industry from the clinical laboratorian's point of view. Ms. Bischoff is the Hematology and Phlebotomy Supervisor at Somerset Medical Center, and was the only laboratorian in attendance at the meeting. Although there was a multitude of issues Ms. Bischoff wanted to cover, time was very limited, and she only had the opportunity to report to Congressman Ferguson that the laboratory community is extremely concerned about any legislation that will reduce Medicare reimbursement to hospitals. Furthermore she indicated that reduced reimbursements continue to affect the ability to educate,

train, hire and retain technically qualified laboratorians and also to purchase new technological laboratory equipment that will provide patients with quality healthcare. Congressman Ferguson indicated agreement with Ms. Bischoff's presentation and thanked her for taking time out of her schedule to meet with him. All laboratorians are urged to take every opportunity to reach out to their congressional representatives concerning issues that affect clinical laboratory practice, and Ms. Bischoff is commended for her efforts to meet with Congressman Ferguson to express the concern of the laboratory community about any proposed reduction in Medicare reimbursement to laboratories. Congressman Ferguson was a key congressional representative involved in the passage of the Medicare Reform bill without the laboratory co-payment provision. This legislation was enacted by the President on December 8th, 2003.

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PRESIDENTS MESSAGE: THOUGHTS ON PROFESSIONALISM



Nadine Fydryszewski

Ultimately, all allied health practitioners work as a team to provide high quality services and care that will benefit the patient. Many steps are taken along the way to ensure that high quality service/care. These include educational standards, professional scope of practice guidelines, continuing education, credentialing, licensure, and certification to name a few mechanisms to ensure competency. Credentialing is a generic term referring to the process of certification, accreditation and licensure. Licensure is the process by which a **government agency** grants permission to persons meeting pre-determined qualifications to engage in a given occupation and/or use a particular title. Certification refers to the process by which a **non-government agency** or association grants recognition to an individual who has met and continues to meet certain pre-determined qualifications specified by that agency or association. Registration is the process where qualified individuals are listed on an official roster maintained by a government or non-government agency. Accreditation is the process by which an agency or organization evaluates and recognizes an institution or program of study as meeting /contain pre-determined criteria or standards. I have reviewed these definitions because they can be confusing to some, and a solid understanding of these different types of recognition are important to understanding our scope of practice, and our place in the health care team with regard to our colleagues and the public at large. Why does credentialing (certification & licensure) occur? The most important reasons are:

- protect the public against unqualified/incompetent personnel
- protect the public from risk
- protect the profession, build reputation, increase respect, increase salary

The bottom line is “for the good of the patient/public”. Most allied health professions have a defined scope of practice, which delineates the roles of practitioners within their profession. Hiring of certified personnel may be mandated by law (licensure) in certain geographical locals, or hiring is based on the selection of candidates who are either certified or eligible for certification. This will vary from profession to profession. The routes for certification eligibility may also vary. Usually graduation from and accredited program is the most accepted route. However, some professions may have alternative routes based on degree and experience in the field.

When would credentialing be important? In most cases credentialing will occur when unregulated practice of the professions/occupation poses a serious risk to the consumer's life, health, safety or economic well-being, and the potential harm is recognizable and likely to occur. Other reasons include the practice of the occupation requires a high degree of skill, knowledge and training, the function and responsibilities of the practitioner requires independent judgment; and members of the group practice independently, the scope of practice of the occupation is distinguishable from other occupations/professions, and the economic impact on the public of regulation of this group is justified. When we discuss the issue of licensure for our profession, we must first look at the root definition of the word, the purpose of the licensing and if the profession meets the criteria set, in a generic sense. In New Jersey, many professionals are licensed, including nurses, doctors, dental hygienists, physician assistant, manicurists, plumbers, real estate professionals, hair stylists, irrigation specialists (those that put in your lawn sprinklers) and many more. We must ask ourselves, “Is my professional equal to these in terms of education, importance to the welfare of the public, unique scope of practice, etc.” If you answer “yes”, the next question must be “Why are we not a licensed profession in New Jersey?” The answer to that question is probably very complex involving professional, financial and political issues.

Should NJSCLS spearhead a licensure effort? Well, the answer to that really is in the hands of not only our members, but also all practicing CLS and CLT professionals in New Jersey. In 1993, NJSCLS (then known as NJSMT) conducted a licensure survey to the membership, with 116 responses. Several questions were asked, but just to focus on the key points:

- 53% **strongly agreed** that NJSMT should actively pursue licensure in NJ
- 23% **strongly agreed** that they would be willing to make financial contributions to finance the effort or work toward the effort

At the 2003 Spring Seminar, NJSCLS conducted a short licensure survey, with 49 respondents. Several questions were asked, but to focus on the key points:

- 87.76% believed that the NJ clinical lab professional community should investigate the feasibility of licensure in NJ
- 14.29% would be willing to serve on a task force to investigate the feasibility of licensure in NJ.

At a quick glance, you can see that there is not that much difference in results over a 10-year period. The bottom line seems to be that the concept of licensure is favorable, but not many want to work toward it. With California enacting a licensure law for phlebotomists, the entire concept of licensure for health professionals to ensure the safety of the public, and the quality of the service is emerging again. Laboratory professionals working in New Jersey need to seriously consider this issue within their professional scope of practice. NJSCLS is willing to investigate this issue, but we cannot do so without the backing of the majority of professionals in the state. This includes financial and time commitment backing. The pursuit of licensure is a long, arduous process, that takes dedication, consistency and in some cases just plain perseverance. Are we ready for that commitment in New Jersey?

Francis Israel R. Estanislao is a student from UMDNJ. He is expecting to graduate in the Fall of 2004. This interview is designed to give our readers an insight on the most recent Medical Technology students. Let's hear what he has to say.

Q: Israel, why did you choose Medical Technology as a career?

A: I chose Medical Technology as a career because I take pleasure in doing laboratory works as well as analyzing and solving problems. This program offers not only an excellent employment opportunity but also an excellent starting point for career advancement in so many areas of studies. In addition to a well-rounded general education, I believe that this program will provide me with a solid foundation in basic and biomedical sciences that will be beneficial in my future endeavors.

Q: What do you hope to achieve?

A: Besides the tremendous knowledge and experience that I am going to get from this program, I hope to learn and understand the ins and outs of clinical and medical field and take pride in the work we do. Eventually, I hope to be able to help people by providing the physicians with the most accurate and timely clinical information that will help in treating the patient.

Q: What is one of your long-term goals as a Laboratorian?

A: Since I was a little kid, I always wanted to become a doctor! With the educational foundation, exceptional training, and medical exposure that I'm getting as a laboratorian, I feel like my dream is just a block away. In due course, I wanted to become a doctor who helps people according to sound ethical principles.

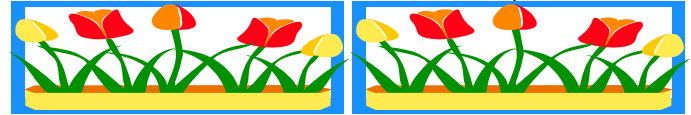
Q: What are you hoping to give to the society?

A: As a Medical Technologist, I will not only do my job to the best of my knowledge and ability but I am also willing to extend my other hand to help the patient as well as anyone in need of my service in any way possible and acceptable.

Francis Israel R. Estanislao



MARK YOUR CALENDAR!



The NJSCLS Annual Spring Seminar will be held on Thursday, April 1, 2004, again at the Sheraton at Woodbridge Place in Iselin, NJ. The seminar will feature 20 continuing education sessions, exhibits from various clinical laboratory industries and an Employment Exchange to learn about employment opportunities at various hospitals in New Jersey. In Clinical Chemistry, nationally known speaker David Plaut will speak about improving patient outcomes in chemistry using thyroid testing as an example. There will also be sessions on dysproteinemias, new markers for prostate cancer and the epidemic of Type 2 diabetes in children. In Hematology, three sessions on Hemostasis will focus on new procedures and instrumentation for platelet analysis, as well as new developments in coagulation testing. Hematology will feature current and future applications of flow cytometry. A half-day workshop on resolution of complex antibody problems will kick off Immunohematology followed by sessions on automation in Blood Banking and Process Excellence. Clinical Microbiology will include sessions on antimicrobial resistance in Gram positive organisms, the use of molecular testing in infectious disease diagnosis and monitoring, important information on New Jersey's bioterrorism preparedness and an update on sexually transmitted diseases. In Phlebotomy, nationally known speaker Dennis Ernst will return again this year to present two sessions about pediatric phlebotomy and changes in the NCCLS phlebotomy standards. The Student Forum has also been busy lining up two excellent speakers to provide practical tips on career management, resumes and job interviews. Once again NJSCLS has received excellent support from the laboratory industry to present this outstanding program for NJ clinical laboratory professionals. Further information may be obtained from the NJSCLS website at www.nj.ascls.org. Don't miss out on this excellent opportunity to learn and network with your colleagues.

NOMINATIONS FOR NJSCLS BOARD OF DIRECTORS

The following individuals have been nominated for the Board of Directors of the New Jersey Society of Clinical Laboratory Science. The state of candidates will be voted upon at the Spring House of Delegates on April 1, 2004.

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

Deborah Josko has been a Board Member of NJSCLS since 2001. She served as Treasurer from 2001-2003, and has also served as Chair of the Microbiology Scientific Assembly, Co-Program Chair of the Spring Seminar and Student Forum Advisor. She was the recipient of the NJSCLS Outstanding Educator Award in 2002, has received the NJSCLS Keys to the Future and Omicron Sigma Awards, and has served as delegate to the ASCLS national meeting. Ms. Josko has been a faculty member in the Clinical Laboratory Sciences Department at the University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey since 1996, and is an adjunct faculty at Brookdale Community College. She is currently enrolled in the PhD program in Biomedical Informatics at UMDNJ, has a Masters Degree in Molecular Biology and a B.S. degree in Biology from Georgian Court College. She also has an A.A.S. degree in Medical Laboratory Technology from Brookdale County College.

Jane O'Reilly, Med., MT(ASCP)

Jane O'Reilly has been a member of NJSCLS for 31 years. She was a NJSCLS Board Member from 1995-1999, was actively involved with the Education Scientific Assembly, and received the NJSCLS Outstanding Educator Award in 1997. Ms. O'Reilly has a B.S. from the University of Rhode Island, a Masters in Education from The college of New Jersey and is the Coordinator of the MLT Program at Mercer county College.

Joe Quillamor, BSMT

Joe Quillamor is currently a second year member of the NJSCLS Board, Co-Chair of the Membership Retention Committee, and Member of the Site Selection and Exhibits Committee for the Spring Seminar. He served as a NJ delegate to the ASCLS meeting in 2003, and was the recipient of the Omicron Sigma Award in 2003. Mr. Quillamor has 14 years experience as a Supervisor at Saint Barnabas Ambulatory Care Center. Mr. Quillamor received his B.S. in Medical Technology from Central Philippine University, Philippines.

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

Meena Rathee has been a member of NJSCLS since 1988. She has been a Board Member and Past President of NJSCLS, past Chairwoman of the Recruitment Committee and Biochemistry Scientific Assembly, and is currently Chairwoman of the Fund Development Committee. In 2003, Ms. Rathee was the recipient of the NJSCLS Outstanding Laboratorian Award. She has 17+ years of clinical laboratory experience including a generalist on all shifts and supervisory and management positions. She is currently part of the laboratory management team at Newton Memorial Hospital. Ms. Rathee completed her MT internship at Somerset Medical Center, and has a Masters Degree in Biology.

Outstanding Clinical Laboratorian of the Year

This award recognizes professional excellence and dedication of a Clinical Laboratory Scientist or Clinical Laboratory Technician.

To be eligible for this award one must:

- a. Have been an active member of the American Society for Clinical Laboratory Science and the New Jersey Society for Clinical Laboratory Science in good standing for three years.
- b. Have a bachelor's or associate's degree from an accredited college or university.
- c. Have contributed to the profession of clinical laboratory science in an outstanding manner.
- d. Be an active participant in community and professional affairs.

Nomination Procedure:

- a. A CLS or CLT maybe nominated by any professional peer who is an active member of ASCLS/NJSCLS
- b. Provide the following information:
 1. Name and address of nominee
 2. Name and address of employer
 3. Brief discussion of the accomplishments and attributes for which the nominee should be recognized.

Outstanding Student of the Year

This award was established in recognition of student clinical laboratory scientists and technicians who have demonstrated an outstanding dedication to profession and to encourage them to participate in the activities of the society.

To be eligible for this award one must:

- a. Be a student member of ASCLS/NJSCLS and enrolled in a NAACLS accredited academic program for the Clinical Laboratory Scientist/Medical Technologist or Clinical Laboratory Technician/Medical Technician.
- b. Be nominated by a Program Director or faculty member who is an active member of ASCLS/NJSCLS.

Nomination Procedure: Provide the following information:

- a. Name and address of the student
- b. Name and address of the Program
- c. Name of the Program Director or faculty member submitting the nomination
- d. Expected date of graduation
- e. Anticipated dates of NCA/ASCP certification exams
- f. Resume of the student professional experience, academic achievement, awards, skills, research work, professional service, and other achievements.

Outstanding Clinical Laboratory Manager or Supervisor of the Year

This award has been established to recognize individuals in Laboratory management or supervisor who exhibit the dedication and professionation needed to oversee the operation of the clinical laboratory.

To be eligible for this award one must:

- a. Have been a member of ASCLS/NJSCLS in good standing for four years.
- b. Have been an active lab manager or supervisor for four years.
- c. Have demonstrated outstanding managerial or supervisory abilities in the clinical laboratory
- d. Be an active participant in community and professional affairs.

Nomination Procedure: See the procedure for Outstanding Clinical Laboratorian

Outstanding Educator of the Year

This award has been established to honor an outstanding educator.

To be eligible for this award one must:

- a. Have been a member of ASCLS/NJSCLS for one year
- b. Have been active in the field of clinical laboratory science education for at least two years.
- c. Demonstrate outstanding achievement in the profession

Nomination Procedure: See procedure for Outstanding Clinical Laboratorian

All nominations should be submitted by March 1, 2004 to:

Rob Culver, MT(ASCP)SBB

413 Monroe Street

Hoboken, NJ 07030

Questions? Call (201) 792-2940 or (908) 218-8167



New Jersey Society for Clinical Laboratory Science

An Affiliate of the American Society for Clinical Laboratory

NJSCLS

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14 Easton Avenue
New Brunswick, NJ 08901-1918

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

WELCOME TO THE COLONY



Lourdes Alariste
Laura King
Chia Chang
Ibtissame Hbaich
Danuta Uhle
Donna Stec

ANNOUNCEMENT

The ASCLS national Meeting is being held July 27—31, 2004 in Los Angeles . If you would like to represent the New Jersey Chapter, please let us know! Call Nadine Fydryszewski at 908-889-2561

Calendar of Events

Event: Board Meeting
Place: UMDNJ-Plains
Date: March 16, 2004

Event: Board Meeting
Place: UMDNJ-Plains
Date: May 18, 2004

Special Event: 2004 Spring Seminar
Place: Sheraton at Woodbridge Place, Iselin, NJ
Date: April 1, 2004

Event: Board Meeting
Place: UMDNJ-Plains
Date: April 20, 2004

Board Meetings are open to all members!
Visit www.nj.ascls.org for details, directions and future brochures