



Planning and Promotion Guide

The American Society for Clinical Laboratory Science

#Lab4Life

www.ascls.org/participate/lab-week-mlpw

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How to Use This Manual

The purpose of this manual is to provide state and local coordinators and others promoting Medical Laboratory Professionals Week (MLPW) with the necessary tools to conduct an economical but effective celebration. Be sure to visit www.ascls.org/participate/lab-week-mlpw for information about MLPW.

A wide variety of activities are described in this manual. Because the individuals and groups participating in MLPW vary considerably, as do their available resources and level of involvement, the projects listed within should be considered suggestions of how to participate in the celebration. Once you have decided what your role in MLPW will be, you can use this manual as a catalog and simply shop for the materials and activities that best suit your needs.



Participate in the **5th Annual Lab Week Run**, a virtual 5K sponsored by the ASCLS Developing Professionals and Ascending Professionals Forums. Visit www.labweekrun.com to

register for the event. Invite a group of coworkers to join you. You can participate on your schedule and at your pace. Invite others outside of the laboratory to register for the event, and use this opportunity to tell them about the medical laboratory profession. Send us photos of your 5K so we can post them to the Lab Week Run website. And don't forget to post your pictures to your own social media networks. During MLPW, be sure to add #LabWeekRun2020, #IamASCLS, and #Lab4Life hashtags to all posts. All proceeds from the Lab Week Run are used to support travel grants.

Timing is often crucial for MLPW activities. The earlier you begin planning, the better your chance of achieving your MLPW goals. It's a good idea to review this manual so you can adequately prepare your projects and have plenty of time to carry them out. **If you are pursuing any public relations (PR) related to your employer, be sure you contact the appropriate department and seek permission.** Many organizations have very strict policies concerning PR. Proper permission needs to be obtained beforehand.

Good luck!

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History and Explanation

This is the 45th year of celebrating and honoring clinical/medical laboratorians. It is important to reflect on the history of Medical Laboratory Professionals Week (MLPW). **MLPW originated in 1975**, as National Medical Laboratory Week (NMLW), under the auspices of the American Society for Medical Technology, now called the American Society for Clinical Laboratory Science (ASCLS). In subsequent years, other organizations have served as cosponsors and campaign supporters. See the next page for the list of cosponsors.

In the fall of 2005, National Medical Laboratory Week was changed to National Medical Laboratory Professionals Week to emphasize the person whose expertise is needed in the performance of laboratory testing.

Beginning in 2010 the theme for NMLPW was selected to be "Laboratory Professionals Get Results" to help brand the event with a theme that is action oriented and relays, very simply, the important role laboratorians play in patient care.

Beginning with the 2013 celebration the word "National" was dropped from the title for brevity, and it became Medical Laboratory Professionals Week.

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, there are over 300,000 practitioners of clinical laboratory science in the United States. Since the development of this career group in the 1920s, the clinical laboratory science professional has played an increasingly vital role in the diagnosis and prevention of disease. Today, the clinical laboratorian is a key member of a health care team.



As team members of one of the largest industries in the United States, the dedicated efforts of laboratory professionals are often unseen by the general public. With the public now demanding the assurance of quality health care and professional accountability, laboratory practitioners of this critical science have a responsibility to ensure that the public is well informed about clinical laboratory competency.

Beyond meeting this public need, the celebration of MLPW will help increase recognition for the profession as it improves the individual practitioner's sense of self-worth. In addition, as the various professional groups within laboratory practice work together on this project, the sense of unity and purpose necessary to further the goals of all laboratorians are reinforced.

MLPW Objectives

- To recognize the vital contributions to healthcare made by those professionals engaged in clinical/medical laboratory science in the United States.
- To recognize the professional dedication of the practitioners of laboratory science to the health care consumer.
- To educate the public, government and private sectors about the key role played by the clinical/medical laboratory professional.
- To enhance the image of clinical/medical laboratory professionals.

MLPW CO-SPONSORING ORGANIZATIONS:

- AABB
- American Association for Clinical Chemistry (AACC)
- American Association of Pathologists' Assistants (AAPA)
- Association for Molecular Pathology (AMP)
- American Medical Technologists (AMT)
- American Society for Clinical Laboratory Science (ASCLS)
- American Society for Clinical Pathology (ASCP)
- American Society of Cytopathology (ASC)
- American Society for Cytotechnology (ASCT)
- American Society for Histocompatibility and Immunogenetics (ASHI)
- American Society for Microbiology (ASM)
- Association of Genetic Technologists (AGT)
- Association of Public Health Laboratories (APHL)
- Clinical Laboratory Management Association (CLMA)
- Clinical and Laboratory Standards Institute (CLSI)
- College of American Pathologists (CAP)
- National Society for Histotechnology (NSH)

Each laboratory organization sponsoring MLPW assigns a staff coordinator to be responsible for assisting their members in promoting the week. The ASCLS staff coordinator is:

Julia O'Donnell, CAE, Director of Marketing and Communication, juliao@ascls.org or 571.748.3771

Planning Your MLPW Promotion

Good planning. Knowing what activities to undertake and how to conduct them, identifying who can help implement your plans, targeting your audience, and deciding what goals you want to achieve is critical to the success of your MLPW. It is very important to determine early on what your role in MLPW will be. Below are suggestions as to how to begin planning your participation in the MLPW celebration.

1 One of your first steps should be to **establish a working committee of members** to help you promote MLPW on a state/local level.

A working committee is one in which each member has specific, significant responsibilities for which he/she is accountable and can take pride in accomplishing. Contact your state membership services chairperson for a list of members in your area from which to recruit committee members.

2 **Delegation of individual tasks** (e.g., contacting television stations, obtaining proclamations, working with newspapers) is the best approach.



While the total project may seem daunting, taken individually, the tasks that make up your role in MLPW are not difficult to implement. **The more members involved the more effective you can be.** In addition, including many members increases everyone's feeling of pride in working together to bring recognition to the profession.

3 At the outset, planning a promotional activity for MLPW should involve **establishing your objectives.** Once you have determined your overall goals, you can use the **following checklist** to put your plan into action:

✓ **Gather information:** What clinical laboratory science issues need to be addressed?
Who is your audience?

✓ **Determine key contacts who can help promote MLPW:** Community leaders, media, employers, and hospital public relations directors.

✓ **Analyze information:** Prioritize the issues you will address; focus on the highest priorities.

✓ **Draft a plan for each priority:** Develop a specific statement of objectives based on

- Your audience
- What action or response you want your audience to take?

✓ **Develop broad strategies for accomplishing each objective**



✓ **Develop tactics for implementing your strategies:**

- A timeline
- A list of personnel and resources needed
- A budget

4 In implementing these plans, **remember that your working committee is not your only source of assistance.** MLPW is a cooperative effort among other participating organizations. Don't forget to contact and work with your fellow MLPW coordinators.

MLPW Celebration Ideas within the Lab

- 1. Have a scavenger hunt in the lab.** Have participants search out tubes used for special testing or incorporate a “safety search” for fire extinguishers, etc. Make it harder by asking for specifics. For example, find the tube necessary for a myoglobin level.
 - a. For an added bonus, have all participants answer the questions to the scavenger hunt and be entered into the lab week raffle for a door prize
- 2. If you have disposable lab coats, have a lab coat decorating contest.** This contest can either be done onsite with markers or offsite where the participants decorate their coats at home.
 - a. For an added bonus, place the coats in a display in the laboratory and allow the employees to vote for their favorite coat.
- 3. Pick themes and decorate each department of the lab**
 - a. For an added bonus, award the best department with a pizza party at the end of the week or other prizes.
- 4. Gather photos of old lab equipment no longer in use and see how many people can identify the technology.**
- 5. Encourage staff to bring in photos of their pet, and then match the pet with the owner**
- 6. Hand out candy at main entrances to all hospital staff.**
 - a. For an added bonus, schedule public lab tours on that day. Create flyers announcing the tours and tag the candy with a flyer.
- 7. Create a “Minute to Win It” type contest with games** (do a quick internet search to find ideas!)
- 8. Host a laboratory Olympics** complete with a relay race with employees wearing full PPE and completing actions that occur in the lab (labeling tubes, finding requisitions, capping tubes etc.)
- 9. Create an MLS jeopardy game** with prizes going to the top scores. You can create a wheel that is divided into the various disciplines. Each employee spins the wheel and attempts to answer the question correctly. Highest score wins.
- 10. Match the commonly said phrase with the lab staff who most frequently uses that specific phrase.**
- 11. Host a cell ID competition** among MLS and MLT employees by using the game portion of the CellAtlas® app from Cellavision® - <http://www.cellavision.com/en/cellavision-cellatlas>.

12. **Lab Clue game** – who killed who, with what, and in which department?
13. **The Laboratory dozen – List 12 things in which laboratorians can be the “best”** (i.e.- best pipettor, looks best in lab coat, etc.). Allow the lab staff to vote for who does each of the 12 items the best.
 - a. For an added bonus, award the 12 winners with a donut on Friday morning.
14. **Without the lab, you are only guessing....**
 - a. Guess the number of candy pieces in the flask (or other lab equipment). You could also substitute candy pieces for tubes, pipette tips, etc.
15. **Host a spelling bee using laboratory terms.**
16. **Guess the Lab Tech: Vacation Edition**
 - a. Ask everyone to bring in a vacation picture.
 - b. Blind all the submissions, post them in the lab, and ask everyone to guess whose vacation it was.
17. **Apples to Apples Lab Version**
 - a. Every day a main descriptive word is displayed like smelly, turbid etc. Everyone is given certain laboratory terms to try and match to the main word. Select a winner each day from all entries. Some examples are smelly as the main word and staph infection as the matched winning word. Turbid and yeast infection is another example.
18. **How well do you know your lab?**
 - a. Take pictures of different things in the lab and zoom in on them. Ask everyone to guess what they are.
19. **Plan a beach theme for MLPW.** Consider the following games:
 - a. Pin the tube on the Lab Dude
 - i. Similar to pin the tail on the donkey
 - b. Find the hidden treasure chest in the lab
 - c. Sort the school of fish
 - i. Put the hematology tubes in order
 - d. Pelican Bay Parafilm Races
 - i. Cut and wrap the parafilm around 3 tubes as fast as possible.
 - e. Davy Jones Locker Quest: Guess the stool.
 - i. Melt candy in stool containers and ask employees to guess what candy it was
 - f. Decorate each section of lab with a beach themes like MRSA's Boardwalk (Micro) and Ep-Sand-Barr (Hematology for Epstein Barr virus).

20. **Post baby pictures of each lab employee** and ask employees to guess who is in each picture.
21. And of course, **what is a lab celebration without food.**
- a. Host a cake baking contest
 - b. Decorate cupcakes like red and white blood cells or chocolate cupcakes reminiscent of stool samples
 - c. Create cakes that looked like petri dishes with organisms
 - d. **Orange** you glad you're a Clinical Laboratory Scientist?
 - i. Offer free oranges to the laboratory staff.
 - e. Potluck lunch featuring favorite childhood dishes
 - i. For an added bonus, invite employees to dress up in generational attire of the decade from which their dish came
 - f. During the staff luncheon, prepare a slide show to be played. Show funny pictures of lab employees and incorporate inspirational laboratory videos.

Proclamations

Obtaining mayoral and/or gubernatorial proclamations are interesting promotional items that require little time in relationship to the benefits that are realized. Elected public officials generally welcome the opportunity to participate in such events. This activity should be undertaken as a joint effort of the MLPW sponsoring groups on both state and local levels. See the appendix (p. 28) for a copy of a sample proclamation.

Procedures for arranging a proclamation signing ceremony may vary among states and cities. A general outline is given in the following paragraphs. If these procedures do not apply in your state or local situation, government staff can be helpful in pointing you in the right direction.

Finally, bringing MLPW sponsoring groups together in the mayor or governor's office for a MLPW proclamation signing ceremony provides a terrific media photo opportunity. Publicity is vital as you begin your MLPW activities, and it's also a chance to tell the media why MLPW is so important and what events or activities will be happening in your area.

TO ARRANGE THE SIGNING OF A PROCLAMATION BY A MAYOR OR GOVERNOR

- 1 Obtain the contact information** (telephone number or email) for the mayor or governor's office. Contact as far in advance as possible. Remember, elected officials have very busy schedules, so make sure to call early and be flexible in setting the time and date for the signing.
- 2 When you contact the official's office**, say that you wish to speak with someone about requesting that the mayor or governor sign a proclamation for Medical Laboratory Professionals Week, which occurs the last week in April.
- 3 You will communicate** with an administrative assistant/aide or a secretary.
 - **Introduce yourself.** *Example: This is Jane Doe. I am the lead medical lab scientist/medical technologist at General Hospital in Our Town, and I am a local coordinator for MLPW.*
 - **Tell the person:** *Medical Laboratory Professionals Week will be observed nationally the week of April 19-25, 2020. We would like to ask the (mayor/governor), to sign a proclamation designating that week as Medical Laboratory Professionals Week in this (city/state). I would like to send a letter explaining the week and provide suggested wording for a proclamation. I called to ask you the proper procedure.*
 - **Gather information:** Your respondent will then tell you to whom the letter should be sent. Make sure you get a full address, including zip code, as well as the correct spelling of the person's name.

4 Below is a sample letter:

Dear _____:

Medical Laboratory Professionals Week will be observed nationally April 19-25, 2020. This week recognizes the contributions of the scientific and technical personnel whose work in the medical/clinical laboratory helps give our nation the best possible health care.

I am the Medical Laboratory Professionals Week coordinator for this state/city/district, and I am writing to say that we would very much like the week to be officially recognized in our (city/ state).

I am requesting that the (mayor/governor) participate in a ceremony at his/her office to sign a proclamation declaring a celebration of the week.

The wording for a suggested proclamation is enclosed. I have also included a schedule of dates and times close to the actual week during which it would be appropriate to hold the ceremony. Please let me know if this schedule includes a convenient time for the (mayor/governor).

I look forward to hearing from you regarding the approval of the proclamation and a reserved day and time for the signing. In the meantime, please feel free to contact me, as I will be happy to answer any additional questions you might have.

I appreciate your interest.

*Sincerely,
(Your Name)*

5 Mark a date on your calendar (approximately two weeks in the future) to call the addressee of the letter if you've had no response. When the addressee responds, offer to meet with him/her in advance of the signing.

6 Once a date has been decided, determine whether newspapers or television stations will be contacted by their office. If not, invite the media to cover the ceremony. Prepare press releases and background information on MLPW to be distributed to the media either in advance of the ceremony or at the actual signing.

7 If possible, arrange for representatives of the sponsoring groups to be present for the signing. If the governor or mayor's official photographer will not be present, request that one of your members take pictures. Send the digital photo to your national staff coordinator (juliao@ascls.org).

8 Be prepared to provide the mayor or governor's press secretary with all relevant information about MLPW. Visit <https://www.ascls.org/participate/lab-week-mlpw> for details.

9 After the ceremony send a thank-you to the mayor or governor, as well as the individual in her/his office who helped arrange the signing. You will establish a great relationship that you may use again in the future.

Working with the Media

Nothing in our society influences public opinion like the media. Newspapers, television, social media, and advertising shape the views, impressions, and behavior of us all. This powerful resource can be shaped by individuals such as you and used to benefit the field of clinical laboratory science and its practitioners.

Using media channels is simply a means of communicating to the general public. Through it we can send messages that favorably impact public opinion and educate people on the value of our profession.

You can make a difference through the media by becoming familiar with the various types of media and the channels you can work through to effectively inform the public about your concerns and activities.

WHAT IS NEWS?

News is an event that affects or changes economic, political, social, physical, or other relationships. It is something that disrupts the status quo. Editors and media decision makers are always looking for items to report to their readers or viewers. However, your activities will only interest the staff of a media outlet if those activities meet their local news criteria.



Essentially, news can be broken down into four basic categories including:

- **Hard News.** A breaking story centered on very recent events or incidents.
- **Features.** Stories that focus on human interests; the story behind the hard news.
- **Community News.** The activities and/or extraordinary accomplishments of people many would call "ordinary folks"; the appearance of prominent outside speakers and major community events such as health fairs, charity events, etc.
- **Editorials.** Included are positions on stories developed by the editorial staff of a media outlet, "Op-Ed" pages where noted experts are given space to air their positions, and letters to the editor.

*Remember, with health care on the forefront of the public's mind, **a laboratory story that ties into this topic could be used by all sections of the media.***

BEING A GOOD RESOURCE

Media relations are a two-way street. It can help you become an effective voice for your cause, and the media depends on its outside sources for material. Learning deadlines, following public service announcement (PSA) and article guidelines, and directing your information to the proper contacts will increase your chances of having this information used. This process will also establish you as a good resource for the future. Here are some helpful tips:

- **Make your presence known.** Initiate contact with your target media. Let them know whom you are, what your organization is about, where and how to reach you.
- **Be aware of breaking news.** Keep up with the latest news, bearing in mind any possible tie-ins to clinical laboratory issues.

- **Make yourself available.** Availability is an inseparable partner to reliability in a credible source. Once you are identified as an expert, prepare to be called upon to provide comments, insights, and additional resources when clinical laboratory topics hit the news.
- **Know the rules of the media.** You increase your value to reporters and editors when you are familiar with their deadlines and the amount of work that goes into meeting those deadlines.
- **Be dependable.** A source is an expert the media contacts for their knowledge. A resource is someone who consistently demonstrates all the qualities listed above, and this sets him/her apart from other sources available to the media.
- **Avoid becoming a pest.** A relationship with the media can be tenuous and easily broken. Know the fine line between being a valued resource and an irritant.

HOW TO COMMUNICATE YOUR MESSAGES



Your job as a media advocate for clinical laboratory science is to give a reporter the necessary information to report your story. A key point to remember is that an interview is not an intellectual discussion, debate, or argument. It is an opportunity to deliver specific messages to specific audiences through the filter of a reporter. Some important things to keep in mind are:

- **Determine key points.** Tell your story from a few key points. This enhances the audience's ability to remember the points and makes it easier for you to keep the focus on your message.
- **Know your message.** What do you want to say about clinical laboratory science and your local activities that you would like the public to hear? Remember, this is your story, and no one is better able to tell it.
- **Consider the audience.** Think of the media process as talking through a reporter to the audience. Remember that it is the reporter's audience that must be reached.
- **Use quotable language.** Reporters look for one or two quotes that will help tell the story. Use interesting and vivid language that sums up an issue or provide a metaphor or analogy that explains a difficult subject like clinical laboratory science

KNOWING THE MEDIA CHANNELS

There are several traditional media channels through which you can communicate messages. It is important to know the basic **characteristics** of these channels, the **format** your message must take to fit their needs, and the appropriate staff people to **contact** at the channels. See summary of each below:

CHARACTERISTICS

Newspapers

- Reach broad audiences quickly, can convey health news thoroughly, provide easy audience access to in-depth issue coverage.

TV

- Wide range of audiences, visual as well as audio format makes personal or emotional appeals possible.

Radio

- Station formats offer potential for targeting audiences, audience involvement is possible for call-in shows, live copy is flexible and relatively inexpensive.

FORMAT

Newspapers

- Columns, editorials, op-eds, letters to the editor, print public service announcements (PSAs).

TV

- News programs (includes broadcast editorials, PSAs, and talk/interview shows) concerned with local events and issues with immediate impact on the community

Radio

- News broadcasts, broadcast editorials, audio PSAs, and talk/interview shows. .

KEY CONTACTS

Newspapers

- **Assignment/City Editors** - in charge of news; decide what will be covered and who will cover it.
- **Feature Editors** - manage beat or feature reporters.
- **News/Managing Editor** - responsible for overall operations of the paper.
- **Community Editors** - for weekly papers, they are concerned with local issues and people.

TV/Radio

- **Reporters** - Cover news events.
- **News Director/Assignment Editors** - Decide what stories will be covered and assign reporters and crews to stories.
- **Public Affairs/Service Directors** - Plan and produce public affairs programs, place PSAs and announcements of special interest.
- **Producers** - On local talk/interview shows, decide on topics for programs.
- **Editorial Directors** - Decide which editorials will be presented and whether the editorial will be presented by the station's staff or by a guest spokesperson.

OTHER MEDIA CHANNELS

Additional media channels include:

- **Wire Services**, such as the Associated Press and Reuters, which have regional or state bureaus where press releases should be sent.
- **Trade Press**, involving very targeted audiences that may be interested in your issues and activities. Key contacts are similar to those listed for newspapers.
- **College Media**, reaching both the student body and the university staff. College press channels can include newspapers, magazines, radio, and television stations.

This section was taken directly from You Can Make A Difference With The Media, a publication of the National Mental Health Association, with slight modifications.

SOCIAL MEDIA

The most widespread and popular channel to get information to the public and membership is via social media. **Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, YouTube, and Instagram** are just a few of the popular platforms to reach many instantly! **Use the following ASCLS social media sites to encourage members to visit, view, and post about MLPW.**

Facebook
Instagram

- <https://www.facebook.com/ASCLS>
- @IAMASCLS

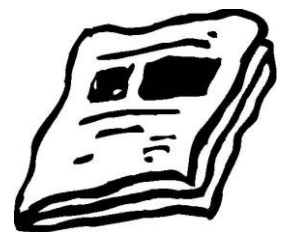
Twitter

- #IamASCLS, #lab4life
- #labweek, #MLPW
- <https://twitter.com/ASCLS>

NEWSPAPER PROMOTIONS

Newspapers are a major medium for publicity. They are read by millions, influence public opinion, are printed regularly, and cover local and regional areas in depth. Use of newspapers in the promotion of MLPW is important for the profession, and good relationships established with reporters and editors during MLPW can lead to more year-round attention to clinical laboratory science. You can become a consistent resource for your local newspaper.

Newspaper promotion for campaigns by professional groups is sometimes difficult to obtain. It is important that the individual selected as your liaison make personal contact with reporters and editors of local metropolitan newspapers. Set up a face-to-face meeting and be sure to bring press releases, advertisements, or sample stories along with you. Newspapers outside metropolitan areas tend to be more receptive to publishing public service material. Their staff would also welcome a personal visit. Remember to refer to the previous section to decide which staff person to contact initially.



NEWS RELEASES

When you write news releases, make them factual and brief. A press release should generate media attention in your story, not tell the whole story. The headline should indicate the contents of the release; it should be enticing and informative, yet concise. Include quotations in your release; a quote from an authority on the issue or a high-level official adds a nice touch when used appropriately.



Do not use abbreviations or acronyms unless the entire words have been spelled out earlier in the release and the acronym is noted afterward in parentheses, e.g., American Society for Clinical Laboratory Science (ASCLS). Be sure to have another person proof read the news release you have written to be sure all information is clearly explained.

Standard releases are on 8½ x 11-inch paper, either on official letterhead or headed by the name of your state or local society. The release date should be headed on the upper right margin of the first page: FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE. Double spacing and wide margins should be used. Included at the top of the page should also be the public relations chair's name, address and telephone number, so that editors can contact the individual for further information.

Ideally, copy should be limited to one page, but can go to two. If the release is more than one page, type "more" on the bottom of each page. On the last page of the release type, "# # #" to indicate the end. If a release is more than one page long, the pages should be numbered in the center at the top of each sheet.

The opening sentence of a release should begin with your city and the date. The initial paragraph should summarize the principal facts and answer the five questions of "who, what, when, why, and where" so that if the balance of the story is eliminated, the opening paragraph, or "lead," constitutes a complete story. Following the lead paragraph appears news of secondary importance, and from then on elaboration of the subject follows to the end of the story.

To ensure full consideration, **TIMING IS IMPORTANT IN RELEASING NEWS TO THE PRESS**. Editors work toward deadlines and need ample time to process news before publication. See sample press release (p. 28) in the appendix.

FEATURE ARTICLES

In the case of MLPW, it would be appropriate for the state Promotion of the Profession Committee to develop an article relative to the profession and the role it plays in the overall delivery of health care services to the public. Photographs of laboratory personnel at work in local institutions are excellent additions to a prepared article and are eagerly received by editors and reporters.

These articles may be submitted to the editor. The editor may then refer you to a specific editorial department, such as the features or health editors. If this happens, contact the appropriate editor.

BACKGROUND EDITORIAL INFORMATION

In contacting newspapers, you may generate the editor's interest in pursuing the topic of how clinical laboratory practice has an impact on health care. Thus, your representatives should be prepared to discuss laboratory medicine, the issues and concerns facing the profession, and the daily role the laboratory plays. Background information can be drawn from professional journals. Included at the end of this section is a list of story ideas that may provide newspapers with a starting point for stories appropriate for MLPW.

YOUR CHALLENGE!

- 1 See that all major daily newspapers** are contacted no later than the last week of March.
- 2 Prepare state and local level press releases** (see page 28) that call attention to MLPW. These can be general or discuss specific activities such as proclamations, open houses, exhibits, etc.
- 3 Be prepared** to provide background material to editors.
- 4 Prepare, at the local level,** feature articles about the laboratory and laboratory personnel. Use photographs whenever possible. Remember to obtain release from individuals photographed.

STORY IDEAS



Below are several story ideas that may be of interest to newspapers for MLPW. We suggest that you add other ideas that you may have, especially if they relate to local or state issues that the public might find interesting.

- An overview of what clinical laboratory professionals do for a hospital patient.
- The clinical laboratories role in detection of bioterrorism agents or emerging diseases (e.g. Ebola, SARS, H1N1, ZIKA)
- The impact of the shortage of lab professionals on current and future health care of patients.
- What the laboratory practitioner looks for in your blood.
- Prevention begins with laboratory testing.
- How healthcare reform will impact access to quality healthcare: A laboratorian's perspective.
- Want to stay healthy? Laboratory testing can help keep you on a healthy path.
- The clinical laboratory provides career opportunities for college graduates and post-graduate students.
- A description of clinical laboratory personnel, seen and unseen, who help you stay healthy.
- Like math and science? Laboratories have places for qualified men and women.
- Despite computers and automation, the microscope is still a mighty weapon in the fight against disease.
- Role of the laboratory in the diagnosis of cancer.
- Recent improvements in laboratory testing procedures and the impact on patients.
- Demystifying genetic testing.

TV AND RADIO PROMOTION

Using television and radio media can be a very effective public relations tool for promoting MLPW. Several types of television and radio publicity can be used by state and local societies. These include shared station identification logos, talk-show appearances, round-table discussions, special events, and news interviews.

Personal contact with individual television and radio stations is paramount. Since the project is a promotional week of recognition for a profession, the material you should provide stations falls under the "Public Service" heading.

All television and radio stations are required to set aside a percentage of their broadcast time for public service programming. This includes recognition of community interest projects, discussions of issues of interest to the public, and recognition of organizations serving the public.

Because of this requirement, most television and radio stations are receptive to bona-fide groups sponsoring worthy community projects. Each year since the development of MLPW, many stations have found value in informing the public of the contributions that local clinical laboratory professionals make to healthcare delivery. See a sample PSA in the appendix (p.30).

SHARED STATION IDENTIFICATION

Television and radio stations are required to periodically identify themselves throughout the broadcast day. Many stations take advantage of this requirement, using the time to meet their public service commitment, too. With television, the station logo will be added to the logo that delivers a public service message. This is called **shared identification**. Often the identification will be accompanied by a spoken message, called a public service bulletin. This is the perfect opportunity to promote MLPW at no expense.

HINTS ON OBTAINING PUBLIC SERVICE TIME

Give the station as much lead time as possible. Three to four weeks ahead of the week of recognition is best and will improve your chance of having the shared identification scheduled properly.

TALK SHOW PROGRAMS

Significant impact can be made on community recognition of the clinical laboratory professional if participation in a discussion period on a local television or radio talk show can be arranged. Most television and radio stations have local talk shows in the morning, at noon, or late at night. If appearing as a talk-show guest interests you or your local leadership, the following steps should be taken:

- 1) Contact the station's program director or the office of the talk-show host or hostess.
- 2) Explain when MLPW will be recognized and that this area of healthcare delivery rarely receives attention from the public since most work "behind the scenes." Explain why.
- 3) Explain to the program director or host that there are several specific topics within the broader subject area that the public might be interested in, such as automation, education of personnel, drug analysis, genetic testing, cancer detection, use of computers, career potential, federal legislation, and so on. Use your imagination – what would you like the public to know?
- 4) Give the station enough lead time in case they wish to supplement your appearance with film of the laboratory in action.
- 5) Be prepared to talk about the laboratory role in depth and offer to assist in developing questions.
- 6) Consider participation in late-night programs; surveys show these programs draw large audiences, especially of professional people.

Regardless of your initial goal, by approaching a television station program director, you may interest him or her in using a reporter and film crew to do a feature story on the laboratory. If you generate this kind of interest, help the station choose a laboratory to report on and the people to be interviewed. The investigator may also want your help in developing a story line.

Open Houses

An effective way to promote the laboratory's role in the delivery of healthcare services is to open the hospital laboratory to visitors. An open house may be arranged through the hospital's administrator or public relations department.

Several laboratories opened their doors to house staff, ambulatory patients, community leaders, and school groups in past lab week promotions. The response was enthusiastic, especially when scheduled tours were conducted.

Open houses provide minimal public exposure. However, they allow other health professionals in the institution to gain a better understanding of the complexities of laboratory science. The increased respect that can be gained should improve working relationships among hospital departments.

Second, patients exposed to the diagnostic testing processes will appreciate what is done with samples taken by laboratory staff and will also gain a sense of well-being because of the professional care received.

Third, group tours for pre-college students may generate an interest in health care careers while serving an educational purpose.

Holding an open house is a relatively simple process. With enough pre-planning, the rewards far outweigh any disruption of scheduling.

Planning for this event should include determining open house hours, personnel schedules, tour routes, publicity, information and perhaps refreshments.

SCHEDULING

Most hospital laboratories are busy places. If possible, set aside an hour in the morning and an hour in the afternoon during at least three days of the week. The best hours and days should be determined by analyzing peak work periods.

A minimum of two knowledgeable laboratory professionals should be recruited as tour guides. The individuals selected should be able to provide information in layman's terms about the basic laboratory procedures.

It is important to have someone ready to greet visitors when they arrive. If the laboratory has a waiting room, a receptionist should be designated and groups formed as people arrive. It is suggested that groups be limited to five or six visitors per tour guide.

DESCRIPTION

Keep your descriptions simple. Regardless of the size of the laboratory, your visitors will be most interested in those areas and tests with which they can relate. Only explain what happens to a test, for example a blood count. Explanations of special chemistries or complicated procedures will only confuse the visitor. You may wish to explain how laboratory samples are controlled. That is, how the laboratory ensures that test results correlate to the correct sample. Patients will find this reassuring.

PUBLICIZE AN OPEN HOUSE

An objective of MLPW is to give other health professionals a greater understanding of the role of the laboratory. For this reason, all hospital employees should be invited to the open house. This can be accomplished by placing an invitation in the hospital's publication, if one exists. The public relations department can help. Invitations can also be produced in notice form and posted on bulletin boards in employee lounges.

Open houses can be a pleasant and valuable way to recognize MLPW. It's a way for the laboratory to justifiably toot its own horn.

Laboratories do need to be careful that they do not generate a larger response than they are capable of handling.

PROMOTIONAL ITEMS AND REFRESHMENTS

MLPW promotional items can be used as "giveaways" or for door prizes. Some hospital laboratories that have held open houses report that they offered their visitors coffee and doughnuts. This gesture of hospitality is best suited to smaller institutions where control can be maintained.



Miscellaneous Promotions

There are several other promotional ideas that can be considered by state and local organizations to recognize MLPW. Some other promotional ideas include:

1. Print the MLPW logo on napkins, table display cards or bulletin board notices for schools, shopping malls, stores, or cafeterias.
2. Show slide presentations of the clinical laboratory at civic club meetings, in hospital lobbies, or in schools.
3. Flash messages on billboards with moving light designs, e.g. bank marquee and shopping center signs or internal hospital closed captioned TV headings during March and early April.
4. Print the lab week slogan as computer printouts.
5. Use MLPW slogans on reports and mailings.
6. Identify laboratory personnel by having them wear a MLPW button.
7. Produce programs of general interest to the public, e.g. lab tests for children, what blood tests show for schools and libraries.
8. Place a booth in shopping malls with career information.
9. Include MLPW information on patient trays or in the cafeteria.
10. Produce fact sheets about laboratory science and the profession to hand out.

The MLPW logo can be downloaded at the ASCLS MLPW website <https://www.ascls.org/participate/lab-week-mlpw>.

INTERNAL PUBLICITY

If area hospitals have institutional newsletters or magazines, prepare an article for the March and/ or April editions. It is suggested that a laboratory representative present the hospital public relations department with a copy of the news release as a guide for the article. In addition, the article might contain information relative to any special events planned for that institution and/or other special events such as proclamations or television appearances. The article should also provide background information on the profession, the role of the laboratory, and any pertinent information on state legislation or educational activity.

Many healthcare facilities have bulletin boards within the waiting room areas. Ask the public relations department at your facility about decorating a bulletin board in a public area to advertise MLPW. Another idea is to place tent cards within the waiting rooms promoting MLPW.

If your facility has a cafeteria, inquire about placing tent cards on the tables during MLPW.

BILLBOARDS

If your employer has a digital marquee, post a rolling announcement advertising MLPW 2020. Check with your public relations department and/or administration for details.

For "Outdoor Advertising" opportunities, check the Yellow Pages. See if the camera-ready art can be used in a public service message at no cost.

BLOOD DRIVE

Host a blood drive during MLPW. Encourage the employees and visitors to your facility to donate blood as part of your MLPW celebration. This activity can be coordinated with your transfusion medicine department. Contact your local blood supplier to find out details.

HOST A DAY OF PHYSICAL AND MENTAL FITNESS

Participate in the Lab Week Run, a virtual 5K run sponsored by the ASCLS Developing Professionals and Ascending Professionals Forums – www.labweekrun.com. Invite your coworkers to join. Complete the 5K on your time and your own pace, and send us your pictures.

Host a MLPW walk on hospital grounds one morning of MLPW. For an added bonus, pick a local charity to support. Invite the entire hospital staff to join in the MLPW walk by making a small contribution to your charity of choice.

Invite all hospital employees to engage in different types of puzzles in the afternoon. For an added bonus, make up your own Sudoku game. Instead of using numbers 1-9 in each square, you can use 2 or 3 letter test pneumonics (ESR, BUN, GLU, CBC, PTT, PSA, HCG, RPR, AMY). You could also use laboratory inspection agencies (JACHO, OSHA, CAP, COLA, DEC, EPA, CLIA, AABB, FDA), collection draw options, (STAT, TS, T, PEAK, F, NOW, ASAP, POST, RT), the possibilities are endless. You could now use M, L, P, W, 2, 0, 1, 5! Let your imagination go.

EXHIBITS

Exhibits are an effective way to call attention to the hospital laboratory. Exhibits are easy, fun to create, and they can be developed around themes. Themes that have been used in the past include:

- **The laboratory of the past:** Display old-fashioned analytical equipment and instrumentation.
- **The role of the laboratory:** How the laboratory functions in the hospital from an organizational standpoint.
- **Laboratory functions:** Specialty areas of the laboratory identified by the kind of work performed.
- **The modern laboratory:** With photographs and information about the highly automated laboratory of today.

Exhibit design and set up are accomplished using draped tables, description posters, and free brochures/informational items.

The location of the exhibit is important. The prime area would be the main hospital lobby. The secondary choice would be a laboratory waiting room. In either case, hospital administration may have to grant a request for space.

HOTEL/MOTEL ADVERTISING

Many national hotel chains or locally owned hotels and motels have public service promotions included in their advertising budget. Contact the hotel managers about helping promote MLPW in your city. They may put an announcement on the daily meeting board, on the illuminated signboard outside the facility, or may even use a poster in the lobby. Ask the manager if the hotel or motel would consider sponsoring an advertisement in newspapers or a public-service campaign on radio or television.

WEBSITE PROMOTION

For constituent societies or laboratories with websites, link your homepage to the ASCLS MLPW website – <https://www.ascls.org/participate/lab-week-mlpw>.

This site includes a variety of MLPW promotional items and information such as the MLPW logo and career recruitment materials.

SAMPLE PROCLAMATION

- WHEREAS, the health of all Americans depends upon educated minds and trained hands; and
- WHEREAS, the practice of modern medicine at the exacting standards we now enjoy would be impossible without the scientific tests performed daily in the medical laboratory; and
- WHEREAS, maintenance of these standards and progress toward improvement in the quality of laboratory services depends on the dedicated efforts of professional clinical laboratory science practitioners; and
- WHEREAS, through this dedication the medical laboratories of the United States have made a vital contribution to the quality of health care;

NOW, THEREFORE, I, (_____ name _____), Mayor/Governor of the City/State of (_____ name _____), do hereby proclaim the week of April 19-25, 2020 as:

MEDICAL LABORATORY PROFESSIONALS WEEK

and urge all citizens to recognize and support the vital service provided by the laboratory practitioner for the benefit of all citizens.

WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the seal of the city/state of (_____ name _____) to be affixed this the (day) of (month), 2020.

(Name of Mayor/Governor)

SAMPLE PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE CONTACT: Date Public Relations Chair, Phone Number Medical Laboratory Professionals Week 2020 Laboratory Professionals Get Results!

McLean, VA – The clinical laboratory professional is a key member of today’s health care team. Laboratory professionals have the skills to unlock important medical information that is pivotal to the diagnosis, treatment, and prevention of disease.

Every day, nurses, physicians, and other healthcare workers depend on laboratory professionals to perform tests on blood and other body fluids, interpret the results, and help provide a complete picture of a patient’s health. Using modern biomedical equipment and complicated analysis, laboratorians can detect the presence of cancer, identify infectious viruses and bacteria, and measure glucose, cholesterol, or drug levels in blood. Without this precise and valuable information, medicine would simply become guesswork.

Laboratory professionals often work in hospitals, physician offices, or private clinical laboratories, performing laboratory tests and monitoring the quality of their results. Others are employed by university or industrial research laboratories to seek solutions for medicine’s many unanswered questions. And these professionals are increasingly found outside the traditional laboratory, participating in community health activities, conducting environmental testing, or serving in the Peace Corps.

Medical Laboratory Professionals Week (MLPW) began in 1975 under the auspices of the American Society for Clinical Laboratory Science (then the American Society for Medical Technology). Now, numerous organizations participate in the event as co-sponsors and campaign supporters. Co-sponsors for 2020 include the following organizations:

- American Society for Clinical Laboratory Science
- American Society for Clinical Pathology
- American Association for Clinical Chemistry
- AABB
- American Association of Pathologists' Assistants
- Association of Genetic Technologists
- American Medical Technologists
- American Society of Cytopathology
- American Society for Cytotechnology
- American Society for Histocompatibility and Immunogenetics
- American Society for Microbiology
- Association of Public Health Laboratories
- Clinical Laboratory Management Association
- College of American Pathologists
- National Society for Histotechnology
- Clinical and Laboratory Standards Institute
- Association for Molecular Pathology

–more–

In addition to MLPW activities headed by national groups, numerous hospitals and clinical laboratories around the country will hold celebrations to benefit the general public as well as laboratory professionals. These events are designed to recognize laboratory professionals, enhance their image, and educate the public, government and private sectors about their role in health care. Whatever the setting – behind the scenes or out in your community – laboratory professionals are by your side, working as key members of your health care team. From April 19-25, 2020, please join these professionals in celebrating Medical Laboratory Professionals Week and their vital role in promoting and protecting your health.

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SAMPLE RADIO PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENTS (PSA)

CONTACT:
Public Relations Chair, Phone Number

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Date

Medical Laboratory Professionals Week 2020 Celebrates Laboratory Professionals

15-SECOND PSA

Laboratory Professionals Get Results! Every day, laboratory professionals perform tests, interpret results and provide answers for a complete picture of a patient's health. Medical Laboratory Professionals Week, April 19-25, 2020, salutes those who serve you through laboratory science.

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30-SECOND PSA

Clinical laboratory professionals are key members of today's health care team, and your quality medical care depends on them. Every day, nurses, physicians, and other healthcare workers rely on laboratory professionals to perform tests on blood or other body fluids, interpret the results, and help provide answers for a complete picture of a patient's health. Without this precise and valuable information, medicine would simply become guesswork.

Laboratory professionals work in a variety of settings, from hospitals and doctors' offices to research laboratories and public health laboratories. Whatever the setting, these professionals are by your side, working to provide answers and guide cures. From April 19-25, 2020, please join these dedicated professionals in celebrating Medical Laboratory Professionals Week and their vital role in protecting and promoting your health.

LABORATORY PROFESSIONALS GET RESULTS!

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