



	Group A	Group B	Group AB	Group O
Red blood cell type				

Addressing the needs of the new professionals and new members and planting the seeds for a promising future!

The purpose of the NPNMF is to engage and inform individuals new to the profession or ASCLS about various opportunities that membership affords. Forum driven activities will support the needs and interests of the Forum members.



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Edited by: Gretchen Brocksmith, NPNMF Chair

What Have We Been Doing?

Written by: Gretchen Brocksmith, NPNMF Chair

The New Professional and New Member Forum is well on its way to accomplishing all its goals.

Each month we recognize a new professional or a new member for the wonderful work he/she has done in ASCLS. You can find these members in each ASCLS Today Newsletter.

Our Facebook Page has been a great success. We would like all new professionals and new members to visit the site. We are inviting you to post articles, pictures, questions, or anything you may find interesting or would like to share with other members. The website is www.facebook.com/NPNMF

We will be asking the Board of Directors for a name change. Currently, we have a First Year Professional Representing us on the Board and it is slightly confusing. Since we are called the New Professional and New Member Forum we will be asking the Board to change the FYP director to the NPNM Director to reflect the Forum name.

We also have Lab Professional Week coming up. Karen Larson has written a great article about games and ways to get your lab and hospital involved.

I would like to thank everyone who help put this newsletter together and write articles. Thank you!

UPCOMING!!!

WHAT TO GET MOVE INVOLVED??

AT THE NATIONAL MEETING IN PHILADELPHIA IN JULY WE WILL BE ELECTING NEW OFFICERS
FOR NPNMF FOR VICE-CHAIR AND SECRETARY

THERE WILL ALSO BE COMMITTEES NEW PROFESSIONALS WILL HAVE THE CHANCE TO APPLY FOR

STAY TUNED FOR THE NEXT NEWSLETTER FOR MORE INFOMRATION ON THESE POSITIONS!!

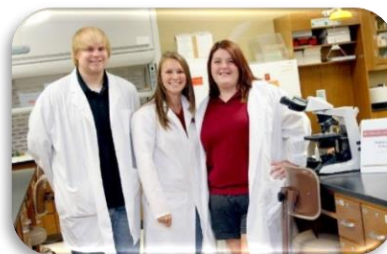
NPNMF Charges 2015-2016

- Establish a key network of those members interested in participating in efforts of the NPNMF and communicate with them on a monthly basis, reporting all activities to the ASCLS Board of Directors
- Educate members of the NPNMF on ASCLS and opportunities within ASCLS. All involved should gain a better understanding of the inner workings of ASCLS
- Identify the needs of those new professionals and new members and determine how ASCLS can help meet those needs as an organization

DCLS

Written by: Brandy Gunsolus

First, as I have not yet met many of you, my name is Brandy Gunsolus. I am a relatively new member to ASCLS and LSCLS having joined in 2013, but I have been a practicing MLS for 13 years. I am currently a laboratory manager for a large physician office lab in Shreveport, Louisiana. I am also the first DCLS student in the country currently in my 3rd year of the program through Rutgers University. This is an exciting time for this profession and I would like to share my experience thus far as we make the leap to serving healthcare beyond the confines of the laboratory walls. Though the coursework thus far has been through distance learning, it is quite rigorous. I have performed so many OVID and Pubmed searches searching and compiling evidence on a large variety of topics, as well as written more papers than I could count with many more to go. Courses I have completed thus far include advanced studies in Hematology, Clinical Chemistry, Immunology, Immunohematology & Transplantation, Microbiology, Molecular Diagnostics, Infectious Disease, Epidemiology, Pathophysiology and Pharmacology, Evidence-Based Medicine, Statistics and Data Analysis, and more. I still have four more semesters of courses to take prior to completing a full-time, one-year residency as well as a thesis research project. Following graduation, I will be the first to take the DCLS board exam that is currently in the early stages of development. The DCLS will fill a void that currently exists in our healthcare patient-centered teams: the representation of the laboratory. Similar to the function of a clinical PharmD in relation to the pharmacy, the DCLS will round as part of the patient healthcare teams ensuring appropriate test utilization, test interpretation, and appropriate action on critical and other abnormal laboratory values. The DCLS will be a resource to educate both clinicians and patients about laboratory testing and laboratory data. The DCLS will perform translational research to improve both the laboratory services provided and how the laboratory data generated is utilized. In my current position as laboratory manager at a large physician office laboratory I have been blessed in working for a group of physicians that already allow me to serve in the capacity as a DCLS. They routinely ask for assistance in test selection, ask for assistance in test interpretation, and accept the majority of my suggestions to change test orders to those that are more appropriate. The physicians have also asked me to consult on patients in which obtaining a diagnosis is difficult and provide them with suggestions in laboratory studies that would assist them in obtaining a diagnosis. I educate patients on how to perform both home glucose and home INR testing. If the nurses are not comfortable, due to lack of familiarity, with explaining certain test results to patients then I educate both the nurse and patient about the test and the results. I have also performed both research and a clinical trial in the laboratory. We, the laboratorians, have a knowledge base unlike any other in healthcare and we must share this knowledge for the good of the profession, but more importantly, for the safety and well-being of the patients we serve.





The Legislative Symposium

**Written by: James Gardner, Region VII
Communication Coordinator**

The Legislative Symposium is one of the premiere events that ASCLS and other organizations like CLMA, ASCP, AGT, and AMT put on every year in March. The symposium brings Clinical Laboratory Personnel together to show a unified front on Capitol Hill. The main goal of the meeting is to better educate our Congressional Representatives on issues that affect the lab directly and indirectly. Issues that are always on the agenda are the workforce shortage, laboratory reimbursements, and regulatory changes. Beginning to understand these matters are where this meeting begins.

As someone who knew nothing about the governmental side of the laboratory, you can see how these issues seem daunting to understand. However, the first day of the meeting is jam packed with educational sessions and the “how-to’s” of lobbying. These sessions are very informative and give you the background necessary to be able to present the issues to the representatives. Towards the end of the day, there is a coaching session on how to speak with your representatives in regards to different situations. Sometimes meetings with the representatives might be in the hall outside their office or a “walk and talk” type of meeting. Each one requires different techniques to get your point across in an effective manner. Standing outside their office can have plenty of distractions as aides are consistently running errands back and forth on Capitol Hill. This type of meeting requires a more direct approach than a sit-down face to face interaction. Even if you are unable to hit all the high points, we are given “leave behinds” that go more in depth to the issues we wish to lobby on. After the sessions end, the planning can begin about how to speak with your representatives about these matters.

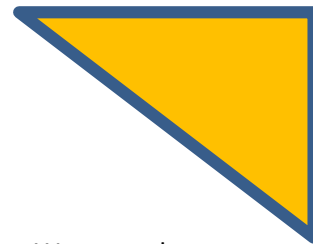
Now talking about these issues can feel like a daunting task, but you need to choose topics that you can

relate too. One issue in particular that I could relate to deals with clinical laboratory education. We have all heard and felt the personnel shortages that are ravaging the clinical laboratories. Over the last two decades, we have seen a steady decline in NAACLS accredited programs across the country. According to NAACLS MLS/MLT programs are at risk for closing due to shortfalls in the budget. The MLS program I graduated from was one of these programs that was on the chopping block. The surrounding healthcare community put up a fight at the Louisiana Board of Regents meeting to overturn my university’s decision on cutting such a vital program in my area of the state. To overturn the decision, we had twenty-three local area hospitals and clinics, including many rural clinics, that were able to provide funding for my program for two years while the educators and recent graduates of the program ramp up promoting our profession to local area high schools. This all came together at the Legislative symposium because we asked our Legislators to reauthorize and fund the Allied Health Special Projects and Grants Program under Title VIII of the Public Health Service Act. This program has not been funded since 2006 and with the

reauthorization, medical laboratory science programs will have access to funds if specific requirements are met. This will also allow students who want to become a medical laboratory scientist access to grants specifically for them. I could make this talking point personal for the Congressional Representative in my district, so they could see the direct impact cutting the education of such an important part of the medical community can have.

Although the Legislative Symposium can seem daunting at first, remember you are the expert. The legislators will hear you out and ask appropriate questions to better understand the issues at hand. I hope to see you all at the Legislative Symposium.





It's almost that time of year again... Medical Laboratory Professionals Week (MLPW) is April 24 - 30! Does your lab have plans to celebrate? If not, there's still time to start a MLPW planning committee. As a new professional or a new member of ASCLS, you may be the perfect person to energize your team to get into the festivities!

MLPW serves several purposes. It allows us to celebrate the important role we play in the medical field and all that we do

for our patients and communities. We get a chance to recognize each other, play fun lab week games, and show our professional pride. It also offers us an opportunity to connect with the public to teach others about what we do and the value we add to their health care.

The ways to celebrate are limitless, but here are a few ideas to get your creative ideas started.

Games

- Tie a few tourniquets together and play tourniquet limbo.
- Take an empty (unused) donor unit bag and fill it with red hots or red M&Ms. Have everyone write down their best guess on how many "red cells" there are and have a prize for the person with the closest guess.
- Try some relay races like how fast a team of people can don and doff PPE or retrieve some less commonly used supply items using your lab's Kanban cards.
- Create a lab word search or picture scavenger hunt and leave them in staff mailboxes.
- Hold a fashion show after staff members decorate their own disposable lab coats. Have everyone vote and crown a winner.
- Pipetting and other lab races. Pour jello into clean plastic petri dishes and have an "agar" eating race... no utensils or hands allowed and in the break room of course.
- Host a potluck or ask your employer to provide food to celebrate together.
- Connect with your fellow ASCLS NPNMF members on our Facebook group page during MLPW and share in our fun activities.

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/NPNMF/>

Public Education

- Request a proclamation from your state's governor or your city's mayor to recognize MLPW and inform the public.
- Share this link or another medical lab video to your social media page and post about MLPW. It's a great way to show your friends and others what you do behind the scenes. Make sure to include #LAB4LIFE in your post!
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aU8vyqHCy5w>
- Host lab tours to offer staff and providers from other departments the chance to get an up close look of who we are and what we do. You could customize the tour based on particular interests each group of employees might have.
- Post signs and displays around your hospital or clinic where patients will see them. Try creating a "Follow that Tube!" poster showing pictures and descriptions of each step that occurs after a patient's blood is drawn. You can make a kid-friendly version for pediatric locations.
- Purchase some inexpensive MLPW supplies like pencils, stickers, or magnets to share with patients. Check out the official store for supplies and use the promotion code ASCLSA for a special discount!
<http://shop.advanceweb.com/catalog/category/view/id/234?PC=ASCLSA&a=1>
- Check out this great list of ideas to promote MLPW found on our ASCLS webpage.
<http://www.ascls.org/mlpw-promotion-ideas-2>

Now that you're inspired, talk with your co-workers to get everyone excited and start planning right away. Don't miss out on this fun time of year to celebrate and promote our profession!

#Lab4Life
Laboratory Professionals

Your Career Your Way **Written by: Norma Bivona** **Fusion Medical Staffing MLS Traveler**

I am from New Orleans, Louisiana, I have been a MLS for 15 yrs., and I have been traveling as a MLS generalist for 9yrs.

After graduation, I worked at Glenwood Regional Medical Center in West Monroe, Louisiana for 6 yrs. I wanted a change and to get out of the box. I read about traveling as a MLS in the Advance Magazine, so I decided to give it a try.

I love the idea of getting the opportunity to work at various different size hospitals, with different degrees of workload, learning new instrumentations and meeting new people. It is just great to do what I love to do and be able to travel the U.S at the same time and get paid to do it.

You are away from your family and friends and holidays can be very lonely at times. I cannot lie I do get a little homesick at times, but I have met such wonderful friends everywhere I have traveled and worked and I can honestly say that if I am not working the holiday, I never spend it alone because someone takes me in and shares their family and holiday with me.

For someone who doesn't know about travel MLS or looking to get started, I would tell them that 2yrs of bench work is necessary before even thinking about traveling. Flexibility is vital. You will have to adapt to a new environment in a short amount of time. You need to be a team player, maintain a positive attitude and be able to acclimate well to a variety of settings. Always be honest about your skills, if you don't feel comfortable doing something don't sugar coat it because they will expect that you know how to do it and you don't want to set yourself up for failure. When looking at the dollar value of working as a travel MLS, you have to look at the whole picture of all of your benefits not just your hourly wage. If you are willing to travel anywhere and work all shifts, you will never be without a job. Just remember that is why they hire travelers for assignments, to fill in the shifts as needed and help the facility out where their vacancies are whether it is day shift, evenings or overnight shifts. Flexibility is the key.

An assignment is typically 13 weeks, you choose where you would like to go and you will be matched with an assignment that fits your personal and professional goals. You will have an opportunity to experience new places, see the sights and grow as a professional at the same time. You will learn new skills and expand your resume.

Some benefits of traveling as a MLS:

- ❖ Health, dental, vision, short term disability, life insurance and 401K
- ❖ Licensure reimbursement
- ❖ Travel reimbursement, per diem, car allowance
- ❖ Continuing Education reimbursement
- ❖ Paid housing

It also helps when you work for a great company like I do Fusion Medical Staffing that has great recruiters and make you feel like family.

I would recommend travel for anyone who works in the lab if they are able to do it. You would be able to see more, do more and get paid to do it. You get to meet a lot of people and work on many different



instruments and perform some testing that you would not otherwise do. It is a challenge but if you are ready for a challenge I say "GO FOR IT!" I did and wouldn't trade it for anything.

So if you are thinking about traveling in your profession and you have that 2yr bench experience, call on me and I can help you get started.

"You're off to great places! Today is your day! Your mountain is waiting, SO... Get on your way."

Dr. Seuss

Mentorship Program **Written by: Stephanie Noblit**

In September 2015, ASCLS kicked off its new Mentorship Program. The new mentorship program is running as a pilot program this year, and if the program is successful it will hopefully become a permanent part of ASCLS.

The idea for a mentorship program within ASCLS came about during the 2014 national meeting in Chicago. It was at that meeting that I discovered that ASCLS had an organized mentorship program in the past, but the program, for whatever reason, was not continued. As a person that believes in the importance and power of mentorship, the fact that we didn't have some sort of organized mentorship program in place disappointed me. Our organization, just like our profession in general, is on the older side. We have many seasoned, exceptional leaders in our organization, but we lack people to move into those leadership roles once that generation steps down.

During the Region II caucus at the 2014 national meeting, fellow new professional, Sherman Binas, and I decided to try and bring back an ASCLS mentorship program. After returning home from Chicago, Sherman and I met several times at a local Starbucks armed with notepads and would sit and brainstorm for a few hours. Once we felt we had a plan and could go no farther ourselves, we began reaching out to some of our contacts within ASCLS and asking if they could help us out in anyway. Through networking, we were able to find many people that were willing to help us and had the skills to help make the program a reality. The formal planning of the mentorship program was a joint effort between the NPNMF and the Leadership Development committee. During the 2015 national meeting, the board of directors voted to make a separate ad hoc committee for the mentorship program.

Currently, the pilot mentorship program is running with 10 pairs of mentors and mentees. At this time, we define a mentor as a PI or PII member with more than 5 years in ASCLS. A mentee is defined as a student, FYP/new professional, or PI or PII member with least than 5 years in ASCLS. This allows new members to also have the opportunity to receive mentorship within ASCLS. In the future, we plan to open the program up to more people.

We wanted to create a program in which both mentors and mentees could get something out of this. Therefore, we have created a program with two aspects to it. The first aspect of the program is the one on one interaction within the mentor/mentee pairs. The pairs are required to communicate at minimum once a month using any communication medium they prefer. In the beginning of the program, pairs filled out a mentorship contract which helped them determine how and when they would communicate. They also completed an action plan, in which the mentee came up with three goals or areas they would like to focus on this year. This action plan helps the mentor figure out the best way to help the mentee.





The second aspect of the program allows mentorship to occur outside of the individual pairs. Every month the pairs are sent a PowerPoint presentation on a different topic. The topics range from how to conduct a meeting to the history of ASCLS. Mentors have the option to incorporate the PowerPoints into their one on one meeting with their mentees if they believe the topic will benefit their mentee. Discussion questions related to the PowerPoint are also posted on the community page for the mentorship program. Here both mentors and mentees respond to the discussion questions and this allows everyone to hear from a variety of perspectives.

The mentorship program has had a very good start and the committee and I hope to keep the momentum going. By starting off with only 10 pairs we can really get a handle on what works and what doesn't. We hope that the ASCLS board of directors will see the benefit of a mentorship program and will allow us to continue this project and eventually expand it.

Mentorship is an important part of personal and professional growth and everyone in ASCLS should be able to benefit from the power of mentorship.

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