

*Workforce in the Shadows of Healthcare:
Update on the Survival Status of
Laboratory Medicine & Public Health –
QUALITY Long-Term SOLUTIONS to Laboratory
Workforce Shortages*

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ANNUAL MEETING

NYSCLA

SEPTEMBER 9-10, 2025



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**TXST
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[Program](#)

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[Watch my TEDx Video](#)



THE NEW YORK STATE CLINICAL LABORATORY ASSOCIATION



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TEXAS STATE
UNIVERSITY

Began as a Medical Lab Professional to Clinical Instructor to Supervisor to Manager to Associate Administrator overseeing Anatomic Pathology & Clinical Laboratory
- QA/ Risk/ Education / LIS



Recently semi-retired but actively involved in laboratory social media forums and authoring articles on Laboratory Advocacy and speaking at local, state national and international conventions and featured in podcasts.

Per diem Project Mgr / Adjunct Professor/ Clinical Advisor
- as well serving as Board Member for NYS SED

Speaker Disclosures

✘ We have no financial conflicts of interest to disclose



THE Laboratory

– Healthcare & Public Health

‘Laboratory testing is the single highest volume of medical activity affecting every American from cradle to grave’

CDC Division of Laboratory Systems:

- *14 billion laboratory tests performed annually in US

- *Over 1.15 billion Covid tests (Nov 2023)

- *Over 70% of medical decisions depend on laboratory testing

Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS):

- *Projects 13% increase jobs (MLS & MLTs) to 2026

Who are these behind-the-scenes unsung heroes of Healthcare - Medical Laboratory Professionals

*Pathology – study of disease including 2 major divisions:
Clinical (body fluids) & Anatomic (body parts)*

Clinical Labs: Hematology/ Coagulation/ Urinalysis/
Immunohematology/ Immunology/ Chemistry/
Microbiology/Cytogenetics/ Molecular

Anatomic Labs: Cytology/ Histology/ Grossing Suite/ Frozen
Section / Morgue - (Pathologist's Assistants)

*Medical Laboratory Scientists (formerly Technologists) 4 yr

*Medical Laboratory Technicians 2 yr

Board Certification is national professional recognition:
ie ASCP, AMT

Many pursue various Master's degrees and PhDs or DCLS.



Healthcare Challenges

Healthcare experiencing severe shortages of Medical Professionals

*Since 2020 = 1 in 5 have quit

- Up to 47% plan to leave
- Resignations outpacing Graduations

Shortages for physicians and nurses are well documented in the media attention – but our medical laboratory and public health laboratory shortages are often found in the shadow of Healthcare!



Recent news

ASCP Workforce Data Included in the AHA 2025 Environmental Scan Report

February 06, 2025

The American Hospital Association (AHA) has released its 2025 Environmental Scan, a comprehensive report offering critical insights into the evolving health care landscape. This year's edition includes workforce data from the American Society for Clinical Pathology (ASCP), marking a milestone in cross-sector collaboration. This partnership underscores the growing recognition of laboratory professionals' vital role in addressing systemic workforce challenges and advancing patient care. The report equips hospitals, health systems, and community stakeholders with data-driven insights to navigate staffing shortages, operational pressures, and emerging trends, fostering strategic planning and dialogue among leaders, boards, and staff. By integrating ASCP's data, the AHA amplifies the importance of a resilient, multidisciplinary workforce in shaping health care's future.

Please visit the [link](#) to read the complete 2025 AHA Environmental Scan report.



Recent news

Current Study on Laboratory Professionals' Education, Exposures, and Motivations Identifies Timely Recommendations to Support the Workforce

February 06, 2025

A recent collaborative study by the American Society for Clinical Pathology (ASCP) and the University of Washington Center for Health Workforce Studies (UW CHWS), was published in [AJCP](#) in January 2025. The study examined professionals across six occupations, including medical laboratory scientists, medical laboratory technicians, and phlebotomists, and their career pathways into the medical laboratory workforce. The study reveals diverse educational backgrounds and career trajectories, with nearly 50 percent of respondents introduced to the field through personal networks in healthcare. Despite high job satisfaction (75 percent would recommend their careers), challenges persist: inconsistent job titles limit career advancement, staffing shortages strain workplaces, and public awareness of these vital roles remains low. The findings highlight the importance of hands-on-training and professional development while emphasizing the urgent need to clarify entry pathways and enhance the visibility of these critical healthcare roles.

To strengthen the workforce, the study advocates targeted policy and organizational reforms. Key recommendations include standardizing job titles to improve role clarity, expanding outreach to schools and career counselors to promote laboratory careers, and investing in training programs to address staffing gaps. By prioritizing these strategies, stakeholders can foster a resilient pipeline of skilled professionals to meet growing healthcare demands. Enhancing public recognition of the medical laboratory field's critical impact on patient care and streamlining entry pathways will ensure a sustainable workforce capable of maintaining community health.

To read the full study and learn more about the results, click [here](#).

Surveys continue to document concerns for short staffing highlighting the issues presented – particularly Medical Laboratory Science

- The pandemic exacerbated
- Lack of media attention
- Lack of public awareness
- Lack of industry respect
- Lack of legislative support
- Lack of compensation commensurate with education/experience
- Lack of right to practice profession in each state
- Stress / Super Stats
- Behind the scenes/ behind the curtains
- Burnout – Work Life Balance
- Great Resignation – staffing vacancy rates exceed graduating classes

Short-term proposals offered:
Band-Aids
lowering personnel standards

But dialogue must advance to ACTION =
implementing the SOLUTIONS!!!

LABORATORY ADVOCACY = National Movement

• *QUALITY LONG-TERM SOLUTIONS*

Chronic
Negativity
Venting
Releasing
Anxiety



FOCUS on
Quality
Long-Term
SOLUTIONS to
Shortages

- Expand Outreach
 - Career Fairs / Immersion Programs
 - *at high schools/ middle schools/ colleges – including STEM*
- Career Ambassador Programs - Mentoring
- Support Professional Societies & Organizations & Associations –
 - ASCLS/ASCP/AMT/ASM/ADLM - NYSCLA*
 - = offer networking and collaborating with colleagues as well as lobbying and documentation/ position*



Attract -
Recruit –
Retain-
qualified
Medical
Laboratory
Professionals

- National professional
STANDARDIZATION of Name
– MLS
- Media Platforms
- Corp Industry Sponsors



- Automation/ Auto Verification
 - as tools to assist the cognitive expertise & independent thinking of qualified board certified Medical Laboratory Professionals



- Laboratory Assistants
 - assist in PRE and POST analytical phases of testing
- Choosing Wisely Initiatives = Effective Test Utilization Best Practices – ordering/interpreting lab testing appropriately for patient care)
- * DCLS as part of Diagnostic Management Teams [DMTs]

- Laboratory beyond the walls
 - *collaborate w/* medical teams
 - take a seat w/ a *voice* at C Suite



- Support STANDARDIZATION of Name –
MLS – HR/ Job Descriptions
- Compensation/ Benefits – commensurate
w/ education/experience

Government – Long-Term SOLUTIONS

*Successful Delays to PAMA (Jan 2025) – *Protecting Access to Medication*

*Bipartisan support of SALSA – *Saving Access to Laboratory Services*

*Title VII Authorization- expand federal funding of education to include

*Medical & Public Health Workforce Coalition – include laboratory

*CLIA recommendations to HHS & Dept of Education = grant funding

*CDC & HRSA Workforce studies – include laboratories

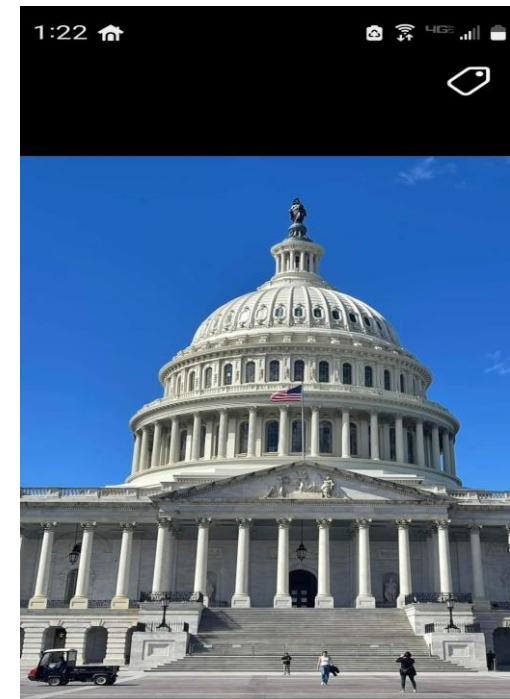
* Bipartisan Medical Laboratory Shortage Relief Act = address crisis

****Right to Practice Profession*** Licensure in all states – similarly to RN/MD/PA
(NYS includes lab: Healthcare Workforce scholarships / Pathways in Technology)

Note: Federal CLIA (1988) only recognizes TESTING PERSONNEL

Footnote: Major recent revisions (2024) include:

^BSRN not equivalent to biological/chemical science or medical/clinical lab



Education!!! – Long-term solutions!

*NAACLS accredited educational curriculum programs
=traditional but also online and bridge

*NEW! - Innovative programs & Strategic affiliations

OPPOSE short-term band aids lowering personnel standards –
NO to only OJT

SUPPORT long-term solutions

acquire the necessary *education & internships & certification* to enable to
become qualified board-certified Medical Laboratory Professionals

Education & Training = Board Certification

- Becoming a nationally recognized board-certified Medical Laboratory Professional = entry level personnel standards
- *Oppose solely OTJ training reducing entry-level personnel standards*
- Mentor/Support general science majors (academic to clinical)
- Licensure pathways also available (Provisional Permit holder supervised)
- Create Avenues allowing Paths to acquire both –
Education (theory) & Training (practicum)
- Master's Degrees in MLS for non-MLS undergrads
- Offer Tuition Assistance - Transfer Credits - Life Experience Credits
- Apply to the numerous Professional Societies Grants & Scholarships

NAACLS traditional and online/bridge programs continue with new programs (despite some closures over the years) – today most urgently need MORE clinical internships to handle INCREASED student enrollments



Program Numbers

Over the last few years, NAACLS has noticed a persistent – and incorrect! - narrative of program numbers precipitously declining.

Data indicate program numbers have been consistent for the last two decades.



AND – in addition to traditional conventional programs – strategic affiliations w/ innovative programs add to enrollments particularly for general science graduates

Benefits to strong working relationships



Clinicals &
Preceptors

Academic
Program

Results

Action

Opportunities

Possibilities

Relationships



Advisory
Board



<https://asm.org/articles/2023/june/developing-relational-skills-in-medical-laboratory>




Promoting the Profession by Aligning Educational Program Titles to the Medical Laboratory Science Career


<https://youtu.be/UyTVxvuakOk>



Promoting the Profession by Aligning Educational Program Titles to the Medical Laboratory Science Career

 Free Webinar

 Wednesday, September 13, 2023

 12 - 1:30 pm ET

 ascls.org/webinars



The Journey: An Overview

<https://criticalvalues.org/news/item/2024/04/16/what-s-in-a-name-change-why-texas-state-university-s-program-is-moving-from-cls-to-mls>

News > What's in a Name Change? Why Texas State University's Program is Moving from CLS to MLS

What's in a Name Change? Why Texas State University's Program is Moving from CLS to MLS

By **Jordan Rosenfeld** - April 16, 2024



In the summer of 2022, The American Society for Clinical Pathology (ASCP) published its Blueprint for Action, the result of an in-depth medical laboratory workforce study conducted by the University of

Recent Posts

Key Findings from the Career Pathways Study: What's Needed Now and Next Steps

ASCP Global Health Scholarship for Residents Opens Eyes to Pathology Needs in Low Resource Countries

7 Ways AI Has Influenced the Lab

13 Ways to Elevate Your Laboratory Leadership Skills in 2025

The MLS Transition Guidebook: A Resource for Institutions to Embrace a Unified Nomenclature

Do you want to write for *Critical Values*?

Submit your idea to criticalvalues@ascp.org and include "Story Pitch" in the subject line.

Archives

2024

2023

2022

2021

2020

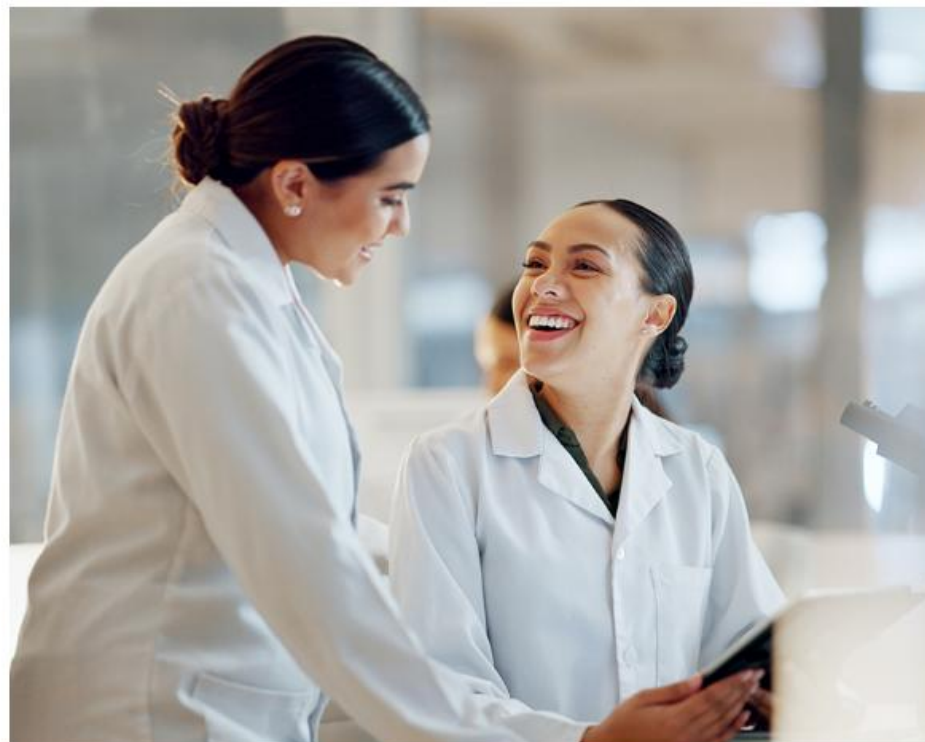
The Journey: An Overview

<https://criticalvalues.org/news/item/2025/01/08/the-mls-transition-guidebook-a-resource-for-institutions-to-embrace-a-unified-nomenclature>

News > The MLS Transition Guidebook: A Resource for Institutions to Embrace a Unified Nomenclature

The MLS Transition Guidebook: A Resource for Institutions to Embrace a Unified Nomenclature

By **Stephanie Dwilson** - January 08, 2025



Severe understaffing continues to challenge the medical laboratory profession, making public visibility essential for its future. However, raising awareness can be challenging when educational institutions

Recent Posts

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The Journey: An Overview



Medical Laboratory
Science

VERY CURRENT – HAPPENING right now!

- The Texas State MLS Program has created an MLS “minor” with cross-listed courses.
- Cross-listed courses will be lectures only and “any major” can take them as MLS Minor course.
- Each cross-listed course will be offered at the same time and in the same room with a similar MLS majors' course

Example: MLS 3325: Foundations in Medical Parasitology [lecture only for MLS minor] and MLS 3326: Medical Parasitology [lecture and lab for MLS majors] will be taught at same time in same room by SAME instructor.

*Benefits are any major [pre-Med, STEM, CHEM, BIOCHEM, BIO, Public Health, or Other interested students can take advanced electives for a minor or credit.

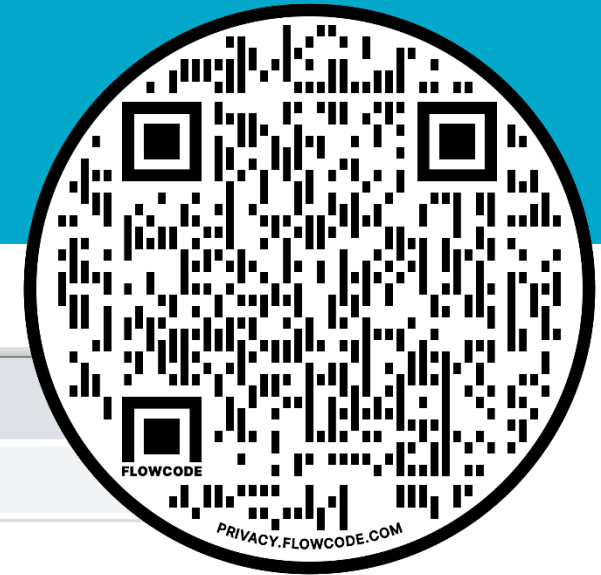
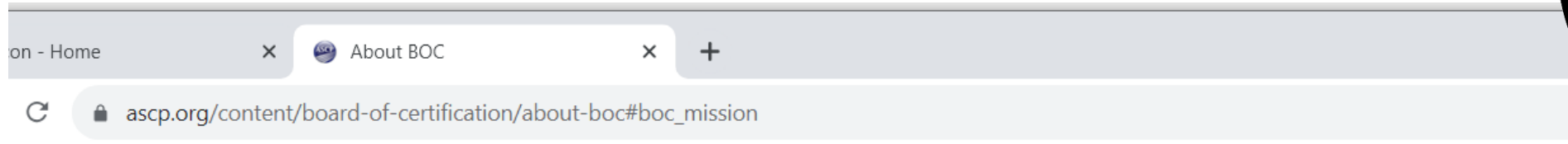
*Will raise AWARENESS of MLS major with others on campus

*Will raise revenue for our MLS M&O budget while not creating more costs



Take the MLS Pledge

<https://www.ascp.org/content/board-of-certification/i-am-mls#>



Promoting the Medical Laboratory Science Profession through Standardized Titles

Recommendations of the American Society for Clinical Pathology Certification Nomenclature Task Force

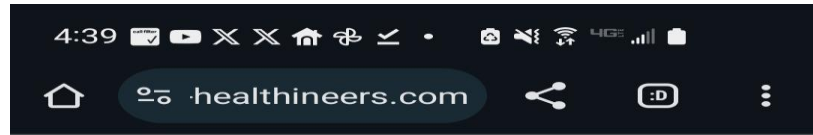
Take The "Medical Laboratory Scientist" (MLS) Pledge Today!

[Read the Paper](#)



ACTION creates..... SOLUTIONS

Survey pffers
solutions with technology



Are Clinical Labs in Critical Condition?

What lab professionals reveal about the impact of workforce shortage on patient care



Survey Findings

MLO and Lighthouse national surveys focus on continued improvements in staffing and salaries - therefore workplace morale

Lighthouse's 2024 Wage and Morale Survey of Medical Laboratory Professionals

Original Article & Data Analysis From More Than 1,000 Respondents



The results of Lighthouse Lab Services' third annual wage and morale survey of Medical Laboratory Professionals show significant improvements in overall satisfaction levels compared to previous years. While this jump is encouraging and hopefully serves as a harbinger of continued increases in morale industrywide, more must be done to improve staffing levels and associated burnout as understaffing continues to be noted as a serious concern.

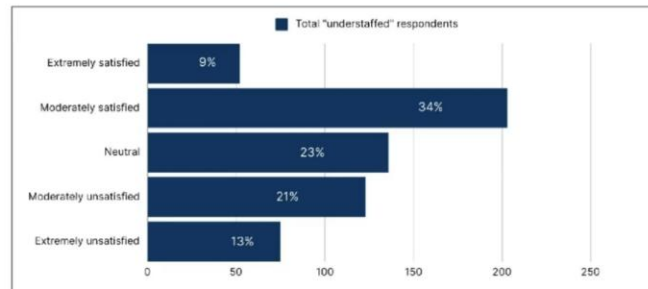
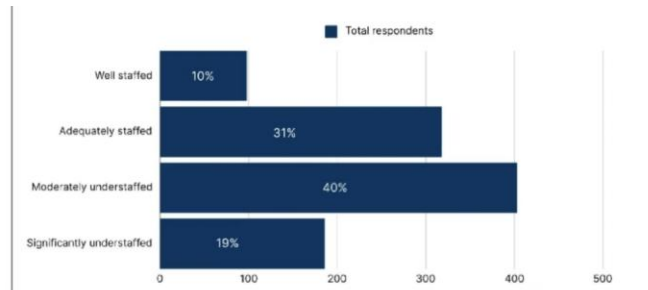
Surveys demonstrating some noted positive feedback

Staffing still severe but improvements noted = quality solutions exist!

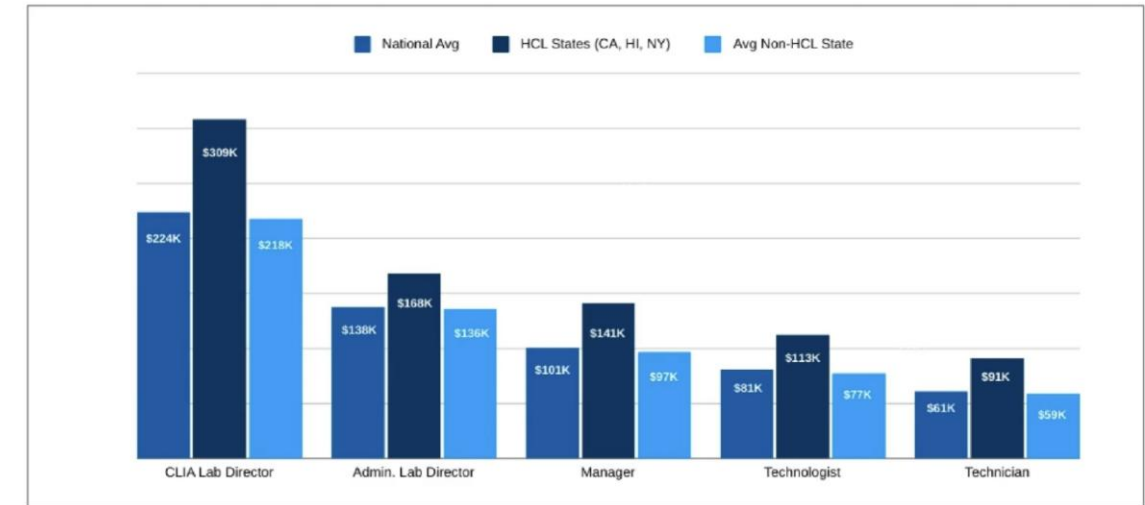
Morale improves not just increasing compensation – but benefits/ flexibility/promotion potential/ appreciation and respect by supportive leadership with resourceful environments

Staffing Issues Persist But Are Improving

- 59% of respondents said their lab is moderately or significantly understaffed, an improvement from the 67% of respondents who reported feeling understaffed in 2023.
- Of this group, 34% described themselves as extremely or moderately unsatisfied in their role, while another 23% stated their morale was neutral. “Understaffed” satisfaction increased by a total of 8% in 2024.

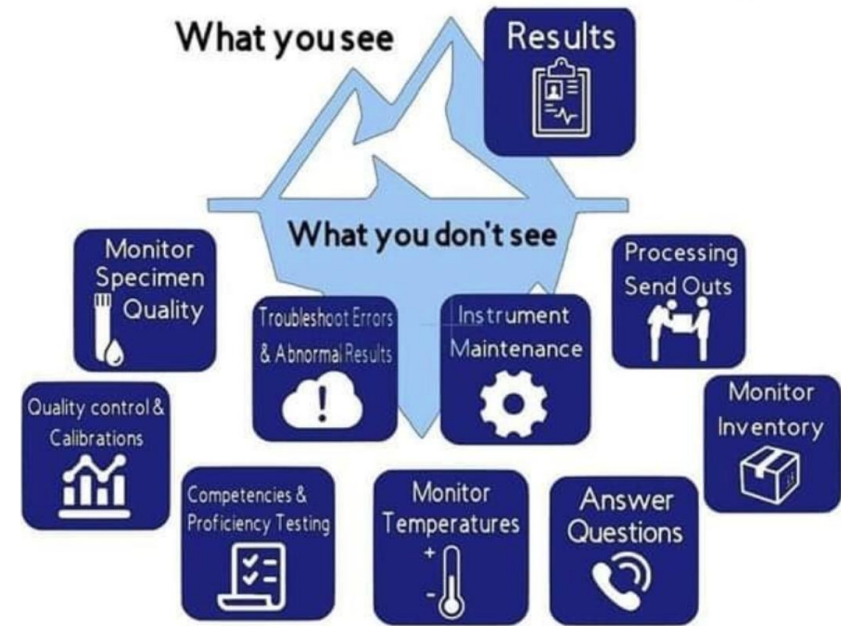


Salary Breakout for CA, NY, HI (HCL State)



So much quality
behind the scenes –
need to bring the
value of Laboratory
& importance of
qualified
board-certified
Medical Laboratory
Professionals
to the forefront !

Lab Results are like an Iceberg



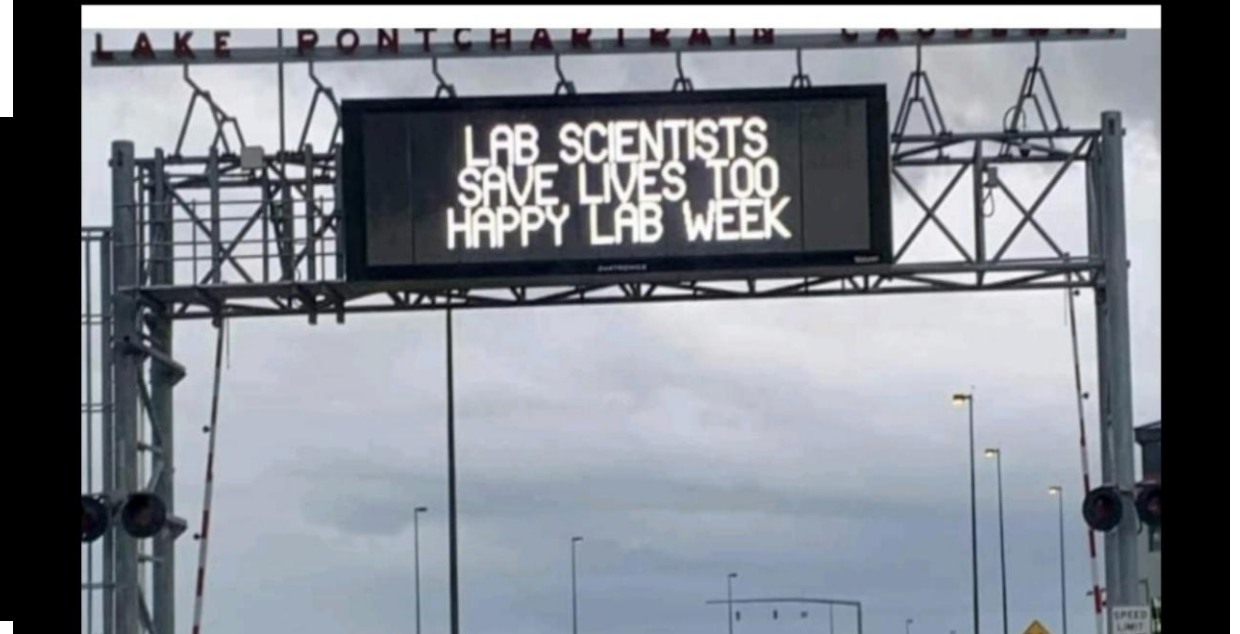
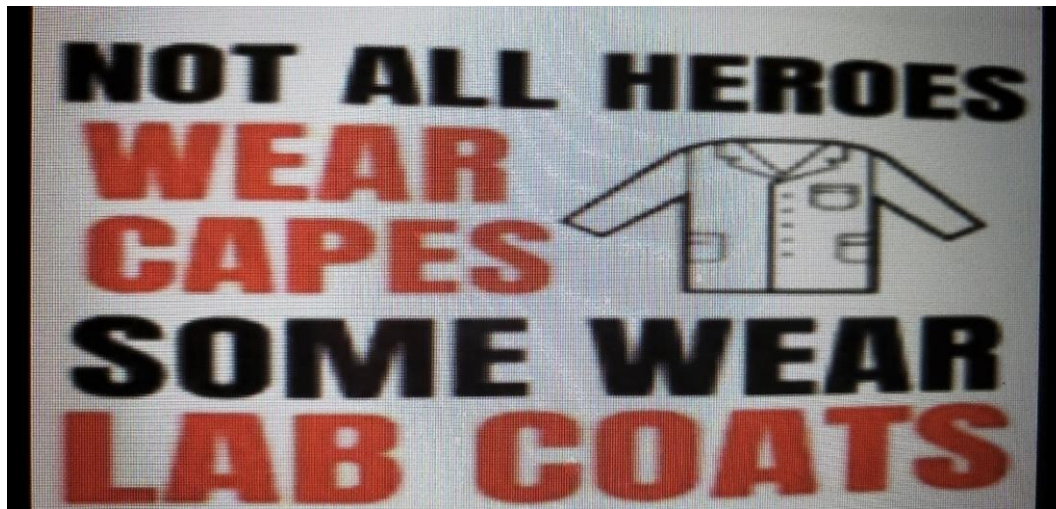
Advocating w/ Collaboration:

Media Attention
Public Awareness
Industry Respect
Legislative Support

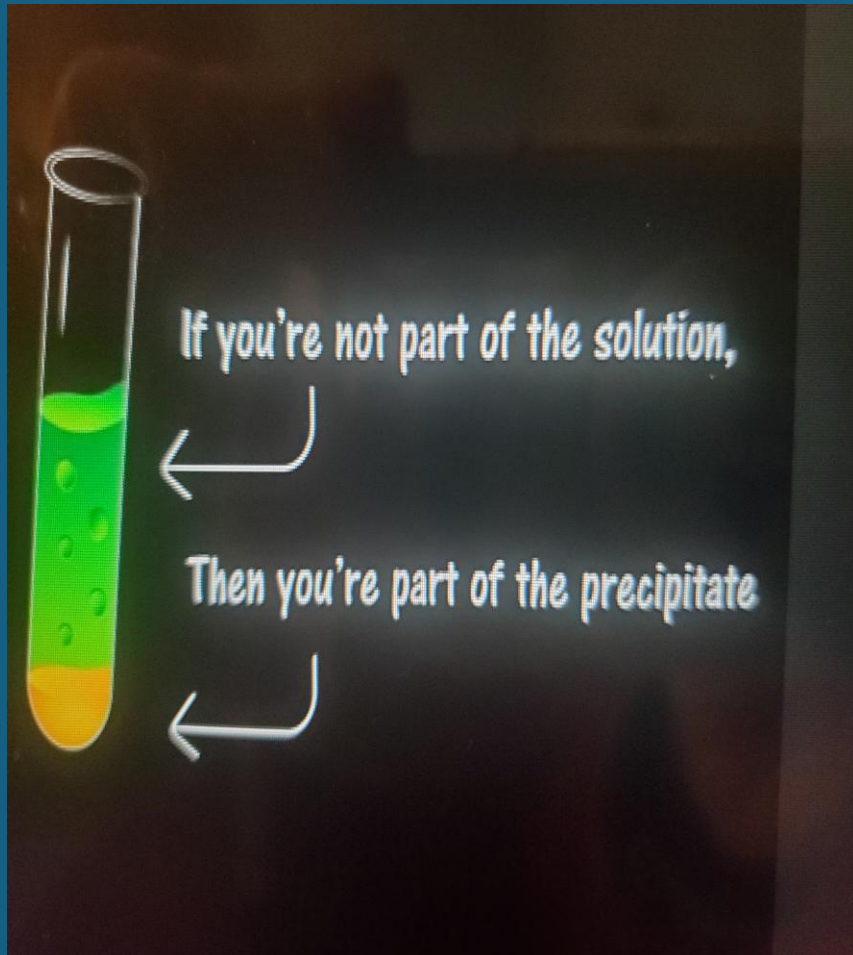
ATTRACT RECRUIT RETAIN

Laboratory Advocacy for Quality SOLUTIONS

***– each and every one of us individually & together-
at universities and colleges – hospital & reference labs –
companies - in the community – on social media platforms
– in legislation – within and beyond the laboratory walls =
collaborating/ networking = impacting positive changes.***

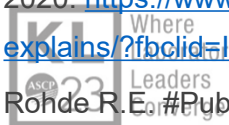


Quality – 1st and Foremost!



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