

# Montana Laboratory

## News

WINTER 2021

ASCLS



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## *The Power of a Profession*

I know we've all experienced great hardships throughout this past year. I know that as peers, we can relate to no one better than each other when it comes to this. I also know that no matter what status you are in whether it's as a student, a teacher, a retiree, or on the bench, you have been impacted immensely by this past year, as I have. What I did not expect was the great divide that would split my community.

As COVID began, I watched a community come undone over this pandemic and the perceived political associations. I watched as the majority favored personal choice over health recommendations and science. I watched a community with scientific researchers who are world renown, actively working on the Astra Zeneca vaccine, snub facts and proof. I watched my city commissioners refuse to follow public health guidelines, refuse to host public meetings virtually, and refuse to guard our public health from attack for following such guidelines. Our public health department through no fault of their own crumbled and our Chief Public Health Officer resigned in the wake of it all. And all this began as we saw little or no COVID-19 disease in our state. As the numbers grew higher and elections loomed closer the gaps only increased. Replaced by masks our community was littered with political flags and party paraphernalia. Healthcare was scoffed and often blamed as taking a political side. Mandates were disregarded and our own public safety officers took no stance to prevent the increasing unrest.

Barreling straight ahead into a holiday season with case numbers rising, our hospital began surge preparations. Our patient capacity was increasing and old wings left vacant were quickly converted into patient "floors" and COVID "wings". Our public health was overwhelmed and eventually stopped contact tracing.

Patients were expected to rely on their at home electronic health records and quickly began to look for guidance from other members of the healthcare community. Days were spent scrambling for new platforms and more reagent, hand entering dozens sometimes hundreds of reports each day and fielding personal and work calls guiding people through quarantine and isolation. The absence of our public health infrastructure and any support left us relying on each other to slow the spread as best we could. The days became impossibly long and hard.

I was heart broken by the things I saw in my community and struggled to find forward momentum. As many of us do, I shared my stress with loved ones and shared whatever education I could on social media. It just never felt like enough. I decided to change the only thing I had control over. I made every problem or roadblock a chance to say yes. Yes, we'll try, yes, we'll check on it, we'll send out more education, we'll implement a new platform, and we'll make those extra calls. Yes, I'll attend that public meeting and yes, I'll write that letter to the paper, yes, I'll attend city council meetings and yes, I'll assist with public education campaigns. Saying yes rather than no was the only way to feel things were moving forward.

We've always done more (said yes) in ASCLS and now we as a profession have opportunities we've never had before. I encourage everyone to try and say yes to one item. I have written letters to our local paper about our laboratory workers with the help of resources found in my ASCLS member community. I've reached out for support and signatures from our ASCLS-MT board and our members to share with their local papers. I wrote to my local legislators. I told them what we are facing and what was still needed. I listened to every free ASCLS webinar and soaked up any resources they provided. I made calls to peers to get advice on COVID platforms and I used my ASCLS family to help do what I could do. I said yes and continue to say yes and put my voice out there wherever I can.

I will look back on this experience and not see great victories or moments where the tide shifted, but what I'll see is ASCLS always helping guide my way. On my side, even when my community was against me. I'll know that no matter what side of history I'm written into, that I did everything I possibly could. I left everything on the table and did all that I could with a little help. We can all breathe a little easier with a vaccine rollout on the horizon and maybe some much needed time. A little more time and a little more information each and every day. Stay safe out there, say yes out there, have each other's backs out there. And of course, thank you all for what you've been doing day in and day out!

Cara Bushmaker, MLS(ASCP)CM

## *Take a shot at Scholarship Opportunities*

When I applied for the ASCLS Alpha Mu Tau Fraternity (AMTF) Scholarship, I was unaware how competitive it was. If I had known, I would not have applied to begin with. I think that is a problem most students from Montana face because students from rural towns typically are not provided with the opportunities that those from larger cities may experience. For example, I was a student with a highschool graduating class of 40, I am attending college at Montana State University Billings (MSUB), and I am completing the Montana Medical Laboratory Science Program through Montana State University. Even though I have maintained a good GPA and have participated in extracurricular activities, to most, this background does not make for an outstanding competitive scholarship application. After receiving the AMTF Scholarship, my perspective on scholarship opportunities has changed for the better. Going forward, I express to Alpha Mu Tau Fraternity Scholarship applicants to be determined and not to underestimate yourself.

The AMTF Scholarship application may seem like a daunting task at first, but do not let that deter you! If the scholarship applicant gathers appropriate documents ahead of time, the application is not as time consuming as you would think. All in all, because I was organized, the application took me an afternoon to complete while the essay took a little longer with revisions. What helped me the most was having an updated resume on hand and utilizing my university's website. My resume allowed me to complete the "Honors and Citations" and "Volunteer, Extra- Curricular or Work Experience" sections, while my university's website allowed me to complete the "Anticipated Expenses Related to Course Work" section. My biggest struggles were submitting my college transcript, as MSUB will not submit transcripts via email, and obtaining a signature from my MLS program official. However, with persistent email communications between my MLS program official, MSUB's Transcript Office, and the AMTF Scholarship Chair, my application was successfully submitted on time. I suggest to AMTF Scholarship applicants to request their official transcripts in advance and to get in contact with their MLS program director as soon as they can.

*Carli Dyba, 2020 AMTF Scholarship recipient*

# **Montana Med Lab Science Class of 2020-21**



Karlee Branson



Madeleine Fay



David McCoy



Mary Jean Wright



Rebecca Tseng



Tommy Frost



Kelsey Meier



Sophia Antonioli-Schmit



Ashley Boehm



Tayler Songer



Carli Dyba



Ticha Padgett-Stewart



Nathan Miller



Krista Woo



Tess Silknitter



Heidi Muller



Marley Sande



Suzanne White



Zoey Roberts



Meghan Muench

**WELCOME TO THE LABORATORY JUNGLE....I MEAN FAMILY (2020 EMIRIGHT?) :)**



Start the new year out by applying for a scholarship! The 2021 Applications for Scholarships provided by ASCLS Education and Research Fund and Alpha Mu Tau Fraternity are available at this link: [\*\*\*Alpha Mu Tau Fraternity Scholarship page\*\*\*](#). All applications require completion of the Performance Sheets, which may also be downloaded using this link.

The ASCLS Education and Research (E&R) fund is the charitable foundation of ASCLS founded to encourage and assist educational and scientific research in the field of medical laboratory science. The fund's Scholarship Program supports education for students, practitioners and educators. Scholarships range from \$1,000 to \$4,000. AMTF applicants and E&R graduate applicants must be ASCLS members. Undergraduates must be accepted into a NAACLS accredited program in clinical laboratory science including MLS and MLT programs. They must enter or be in the last year of their education between January 1, 2021 and December 31, 2021. Graduate applicants cannot complete their education before September 30, 2021.

There are separate applications for scholarships for students in MLT and MLS programs. There is one application for students in graduate programs for Masters, Doctoral Program (Ph.D. or EdD), or Doctorate in Clinical Laboratory Science (DCLS) in areas related to clinical laboratory science including Clinical Laboratory Education or Management. Only one application is required to be considered for scholarships offered by ASCLS Education and Research Fund and Alpha Mu Tau Fraternity.

The deadline for submission is April 1, 2021 and all application materials must be received no later than April 1, 2021. The application submission process is entirely electronic, including submission of official transcripts so remember to take into account the time needed to order and process electronic transcripts to ensure receipt by April 1.

If you are interested in furthering your education, please consider applying for one of these scholarships. If you have any questions, you can please contact me directly or send a message to [amtfscholarship@gmail.com](mailto:amtfscholarship@gmail.com)

Holly Weinberg  
Chair, Scholarship Committee, 2020-2021  
Alpha Mu Tau Fraternity

## Stay in touch virtually!

As members of ASCLS one of your most valuable resources is the [ASCLS Connect Community](#)! Each year you can customize your member community to receive email updates regarding our state society news/updates, any laboratory specialty of interest, and hot topics in the laboratory world. Stay connected to our membership across the US and across our big sky state. The most resources are at our fingertips via the [Connect Community](#), download the app today.

### ≡ ASCLS Connect Community and Mobile App

Connect through the Online Community at [connect.ascls.org](http://connect.ascls.org)

Download a New App to Access the Connect Community on Your Mobile Device

Convenient. The app keeps you logged in, making the entire Connect Community (and all its functions) just an icon away.

Accessible. Look up other members in the directory, send and respond to messages, and monitor community discussions in real time.

Fun!



MemberCentric  
Results Direct

Social

To download the app:

1. Go to the [Google Play store](#) or the [Apple App Store](#) and download the MemberCentric app.

2. Search for ASCLS when prompted to "Find your organization."

INSTALL

3. Log in using your credentials for your ASCLS member account.

KEEP  
YOUR  
EYES  
PEELED  
FOR  
THESE  
SUSPECTS

**WANTED**

**Isolates of:**

- Salmonella spp.*
- Toxigenic *Escherichia coli* or STEC positive broths
- Shigella spp.*
- Campylobacter spp.* or EIA positive specimens
- Listeria spp.*
- Vibrio spp.*
- Neisseria gonorrhoeae*
- Invasive *Neisseria meningitidis*
- Invasive *Haemophilus influenzae*
- Bordetella pertussis*
- Suspected VISA, VRSA, CRE
- Drug Resistant *S. pneumoniae*
- Isolates with Unusual Resistance Patterns*
- Outbreak Associated Organisms*

**Must Be Taken Alive!**

Submit (at no cost to you) to:  
**MT Public Health Laboratory**

Questions? Call 800-821-7284



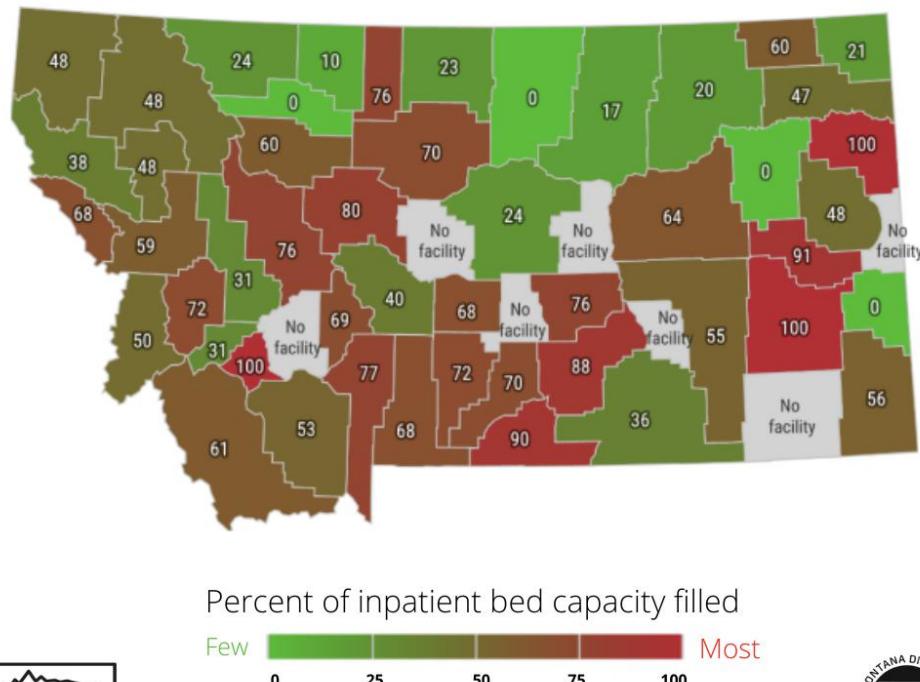
Department of Public Health & Human Services

# COVID-19 Resources

## Percent of Inpatient Beds Filled by County

Updated 1/14/2021

Missing/incomplete data is shown as blank or missing



Keep up to date on the latest COVID-19 case counts, hospitalizations, and active cases by county. The state laboratory has expanded hours 7 days a week. Watch for updates via email!

[\*\*Montana Response-COVID-19\*\*](#)



## **SPOTLIGHT ON LABORATORY SAFETY**

Free for download from CDC is the 6th edition of Biosafety in Microbiological and Biomedical Laboratories (BMBL).

**Foreword:** Biosafety in Microbiological and Biomedical Laboratories (BMBL) has served as the cornerstone of biosafety practice in the United States since its initial release in 1984. We wish to emphasize that the sixth edition of BMBL remains an advisory document recommending best practices for the safe conduct of work in biomedical and clinical laboratories from a biosafety perspective. The BMBL is not intended to be a regulatory document, although we recognize that some may use it in that way. The core principle of this document is protocol-driven risk assessment; it is not possible for a single document to identify all of the possible combinations of risks and mitigations feasible in biomedical and clinical laboratories. The BMBL should be used as a tool in the assessment and proposed mitigation steps in biomedical and clinical laboratories.

This edition of BMBL includes revised sections, agent summary statements, and appendices. We harmonized the recommendations included in this edition with guidance issued and regulations promulgated by other organizations and federal agencies. Wherever possible, we clarified both the language and intent of the information provided. In order to serve the needs of our community better, this edition includes new appendices on the following topics: inactivation and verification; laboratory sustainability; large-scale biosafety; and clinical laboratory biosafety.

Over 200 of our scientific and professional colleagues contributed to the preparation of the sixth edition through participation in technical working groups and serving as reviewers, guest editors, and subject matter experts. We wish to thank them all for their dedication and hard work. Without them, the sixth edition of BMBL would not be possible. We also recognize the hard work and contributions made by all who participated in preparation of the previous editions of BMBL; we have built on their solid work and commitment.

It would have been impossible to publish this revision without recognizing the visionary leadership of the previous BMBL editors—Drs. John Richardson, W. Emmett Barkley, Jonathan Richmond, Robert W. McKinney, Casey Chosewood, and Deborah Wilson—with whom the BMBL would not be the respected resource it is today. The Steering Committee members, Drs. Christy Myrick, Richard G. Baumann, Margy Lambert, Patricia Delarosa, and Theresa Lawrence, were instrumental in identifying authors, selecting additions to this edition, and reviewing submissions. Their significant contribution to this edition is sincerely appreciated. Dr. Robbin Weyant contributed significantly to the final editing and production efforts.

We are truly grateful to Ms. Shaina Mangino and Dr. Mallory Pomales of Eagle Medical Services, LLC for their expertise and patience in assisting us with this undertaking. Their superb organizational and editing skills were critical in the creation of this document.

We hope you find the sixth edition of Biosafety in Microbiological and Biomedical Laboratories complete, timely, and most of all, easy to use. Thank you for your patience and understanding during the long and comprehensive revision process.

Paul J. Meechan, PhD, MPH, RBP, CBSP(ABSA)  
Retired  
Office of Laboratory Science and Safety  
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention  
Atlanta, GA

Jeffrey Potts, MPH, CBSP(ABSA)  
Chief, Biorisk Management Branch  
Division of Occupational Health and Safety  
National Institutes of Health  
Bethesda, MD



## ! STUDENT ALERT !

### ! SCHOLARSHIP DEADLINES FOR ASCLS-MT STUDENTS !

Ascending Professional Leadership Award (**Due February 15**)

Developing Professional Leadership Award (**Due February 15**)

Lifetime Achievement Award (**Due February 15**)

Society Website Award (**Due February 15**)

Society Publication Award (**Due February 15**)

Scientific Research Award (**Due February 15**)

Scientific Assembly Professional Achievement Award (**Due February 15**)

Theriot Award (**Due February 15**)

Alpha Mau Tau Scholarship (April 1)

Voices Under 40 (Due April 1)

Constituent Society Member of the Year Recognition (Due April 1)

Omicron Sigma (Due April 1)

Keys to the Future (Due May 1)

Promotion of the Profession Fundraising Award (Due May 15)

\*See the National Website [HERE](#) for more details!\*

## The (Virtual) Room Where It Happens **CALL FOR NOMINATIONS**

We are looking for new board members! No experience required. Train on the job with some fantastic leaders and help grow and promote clinical laboratory science. History is being made right now-be in "the room where it happens"! Send your information in

on the [GET INVOLVED](#) tab via the state website opportunities included below:

### 1. [President-elect](#)

### 2. [Board of Directors - 1 st year](#)

### 3. [Awards and Scholarships](#) – 1 st year

### 4. [Nominations](#) – 1 st year

### 5. [TREASURER – 2 YEAR TERM](#)





# I AM NOT THROWING AWAY MY SHOT

WE, THE HEALTHCARE WORKERS,  
ARE NOT  
YOUR FRONTLINERS ANY LONGER.  
WE ARE YOUR LAST LINE OF DEFENSE.  
YOU, MY FELLOW PEOPLE,  
ARE THE FRONTLINERS NOW.  
THE WAR HAS SHIFTED TO  
THE COMMUNITY AND IT IS UP TO YOU.  
THIS CANNOT BE WON IN THE CONFINES  
OF THE HOSPITAL...

- DR. BRIAN J. CALINAWAGAN



## Tracking the Coronavirus ›

United States ›	On July 13	1
New cases	61,492	
New deaths	425	

Where cases are **rising fastest**

- ↗ Mont.
- ↗ W.Va.
- ↗ Hawaii
- ↗ La.
- ↗ Idaho
- ↗ PR.

## U.S. hot spots ›



## Worldwide ›



## How To Use: Reusable Face Coverings



#MaskUpWisconsin

WISCONSIN DEPARTMENT OF  
HEALTH SERVICES  
/COSMETIC DIVISION



## *Critical Access Hospital Incident Command during COVID-19*

It started before the first case of COVID-19 was reported in Montana. Our Incident Command (IC) team launched and never looked back. As hospital administrations across the country struggled to understand how to implement CMS infection control regulations, Incident Command teams quickly got to work to restrict entrances and communicate with employees and patients. For myself, it was difficult to be a part of our hospitals IC team. Already wearing a hat or two before the chaos started, wearing this one was the heaviest of all. Quickly, employees were thrust into positions they knew very little about – Operations, Logistics, Planning and Financial pillars were stood up. Teams of employees helped support these pillars.

Operations and Planning worked to develop a Surge Plan that would support the staff as we planned for the difficult year ahead. Negative pressure areas were developed and areas moved and converted. Sick suites and swabbing areas began seeing patients. The Financial pillar stayed busy looking for ways to keep our hospital afloat financially with PPP loans and CARES act money. Logistics worked to procure supplies and foresee burn rates in a backorder world. Cross training of staff was essential and a battle all the same.

All the while business came to a halt and employees sat and waited for the coming of COVID. Slowly businesses reopened and so did hospitals and elective surgeries. IC felt the lull and took a breath. Eventually restructuring of IC occurred and the realization that a formal IC was unnecessary. Rather, it was more important to rely on people strengths in Infection Control, Emergency Preparedness and Employee Health. Now with vaccine being distributed to the general public, planning has shifted to community wide efforts. Unified Command supports and utilizes the many entities within our community including our Health District, Nursing Homes, Schools, small businesses, clinics and our Hospital.

Being a part of IC has been a huge learning experience and something I do not take for granted in being selected for. Constant change has become a normal occurrence and all of us are getting accustomed to this in the hospital world. I value teamwork and communication more than ever. Many of you have seen your IC teams work within your own facilities. Know that the work they do is intense and something they do not take lightly. The decisions made support staff and patient safety and are discussed at length to review all angles for the best possible outcome

Abbey Wichman, MLS(ASCP) cm  
ASCLS-MT President  
Director of Compliance & Risk Management

# SAVE THE DATE FOR LAB WEEK RUN APRIL 18-24, 2021



WALK IT, STROLL IT, ROW IT, BIKE IT, SWIM IT.  
JUST DON'T MISS IT.

LABWEEKRUN.COM



## PODCASTS

The Off the Bench podcast series discusses scientific and not-so-scientific ideas in laboratory medicine. Join the **ASCLS Off the Bench Facebook Group** to continue the discussions and share your feedback. Let's share ideas and talk nerdy.



Off the Bench  
Recalibration - Bad Lab Science on ...  
 0:00 -0:00

POdBean

A screenshot of a podcast player interface showing the "Off the Bench" episode titled "Recalibration - Bad Lab Science on ...". The player shows a play button, a progress bar at 0:00, and a volume slider. The bottom right corner of the player has the "POdBean" logo.

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ABOUT

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# ASCLS UPCOMING EVENTS:

**1. 2021 Emerging Laboratory Managers Collaborative Conference (ELMC2) - January 15-16**

Virtual Event

**2. 2021 CLEC - February 25-27**

Virtual Event

**3. 2021 ASCLS-MT Annual Spring Meeting-April TBD**

Virtual Event

**4. 2021 LAB WEEK- April 18-24th**

**5. 2021 Annual Meeting - June 27-July 1**

Omni Louisville Hotel, Louisville, KY

## ASCLS-MT IS ON SOCIAL MEDIA...BE SURE TO CHECK US OUT!



FOLLOW US TO STAY UP ON THE LATEST NEWS AFFECTING OUR PROFESSION, CONFERENCE UPDATES, TECHNOLOGY, GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS AND SOCIETY UPDATES.

IF YOU HAVE HAVEN'T ALREADY, FOLLOW US, LIKE US AND SHOW US SOME LOVE! YOU CAN ALSO STAY CONNECTED WITH US AND OTHER LABORATORIANS WITH #WESENSELIVESEVERDAY #IAMASCLS #UNITEDAGAINSTCOVID19 #ASCLSMT #ASCLS

Explore the ASCLS-MT website by clicking on the graphic below.

