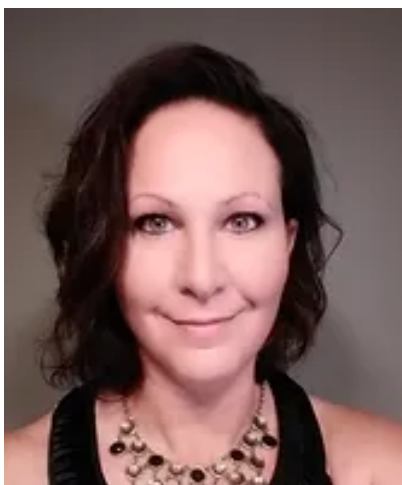


MONTANA LABORATORY NEWS

Edition : Winter 2024



Greetings ASCLS-MT Members!

BY JENNIFER WOLCOTT ASCLS-MT PRESIDENT

February is halfway through, and we are gaining a little daylight each day! I always struggle this time of year due to the lack of seeing the sun. It is dark when I go to work, and it is dark when I get home from work. We can also get so busy with life that it seems we are just barely surviving the days. So how can we best get through these last remnants of winter?

Take time for self-care. In her article at [verywellhealth.com](https://www.verywellhealth.com), Angela Bottaro defines self-care as “the practice of taking care of physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual aspects of your life to promote health and wellness.” She also states that, “While many people may view self-care as a form of selfish indulgence, the act of caring for oneself is an important part of a person’s overall well-being.” 1

This issue:

Self Care

PAGE 02

Awards and Scholarship

PAGE 03

Legislative Updates

PAGE 05

DCLS

PAGE 06

Lab Developed Tests

PAGE 07

Here are some practical ways we can prioritize our self-care now and into the upcoming months.



ASCLS
The American Society for
Clinical Laboratory Science
MONTANA

This will help ensure that you have a healthy work-life balance.

1. Prioritize a good healthy sleep schedule. Getting enough quality sleep has an enormous impact on our physical and emotional well-being.
2. Get outside and exercise or go to the gym for a workout. Exercise is important not only for physical health, but also boosts mood, and reduces anxiety and stress.
3. Get out in nature if you can, nature tends to balance us.
4. Eat a healthy diet, as this helps you physically feel better.
5. Practice gratitude and mindfulness. This does not have to be a daunting task. Throughout your day, just take a few moments to think of things you are grateful for and acknowledge them in your mind.
6. Engage your brain and body in a new activity or hobby. Trying something new keeps us from getting stagnant and is stimulating!
7. Foster the relationships in your life by not isolating yourself. It can be very tempting to isolate yourself when you are down or struggling. But use your tribes for support. Lean on those closest to you, whether friends or family. Get professional help if you need to.
8. Nurture your spiritual side by taking time to reflect, pray or meditate.

If engaging in your career and with fellow professionals is a priority for you this year, please consider attending our Spring Meeting in Billings April 11-13, 2024. Our planning committee has been hard at work putting together an amazing, full program with a wide variety of topics and disciplines. Please visit ascls-mt.org/conferences for more information and registration will open shortly. Hotel reservations are now available. Hope to see you all there,

Jennifer Wolcott

ASCLS-MT President 2023-2024

References:

1. What Is Self-Care and Why is It Important? ([verywellhealth.com](https://www.verywellhealth.com))

For a few more self-care ideas, please go here:

[Take Care of Yourself: 25 Science-Backed Self-Care Tips \(greatist.com\)](https://www.greatist.com)

AWARDS &

SCHOLARSHIP

More information can be found at <https://www.ascls-mt.org/awards-scholarships>.

Due
March
15th

MEMBER OF THE YEAR

Any ASCLS-MT member is eligible to nominate someone for this award. A short essay needs to be received from the nominator, describing the merits of the nominee as an individual and as an active member of ASCLS-MT. If more than one person is nominated, the Awards & Scholarship committee chooses the winner. The winner receives a plaque sponsored by ASCLS-MT and a cash award. The winner also becomes the nominee from our state for the National ASCLS Constituent Society Member of the Year Recognition.

STUDENT OF THE YEAR AWARD

EDUCATION COORDINATORS OR INSTRUCTORS MAY NOMINATE A STUDENT FOR THIS AWARD BY SUBMITTING A SHORT LETTER DESCRIBING HOW THEIR NOMINEE MEETS THE FOLLOWING 6 CRITERIA USED IN JUDGING. STUDENTS WILL BE JUDGED IN SIX CRITERIA.

STUDENT POSTER OF THE YEAR AWARD

STUDENTS WHO PRESENT THEIR POSTER PERTAINING TO CLINICAL LABORATORY SCIENCE AT THE ASCLS-MT SPRING MEETING ARE ELIGIBLE FOR THIS AWARD.

SPRING MEETING ATTENDEES WILL VOTE ON THE STUDENT POSTER OF THE YEAR. THE WINNER OF THIS AWARD RECEIVES A CASH AWARD.

PAPER OF THE YEAR AWARD

ASCLS-MT MEMBERS ARE ELIGIBLE TO SUBMIT A PAPER ON A TOPIC PERTAINING TO CLINICAL LABORATORY SCIENCE. THE PAPER SHOULD BE EITHER A RESEARCH PAPER, A CASE STUDY, OR A SCIENTIFIC LITERATURE REVIEW.

Decoding Current Clinical Lab Legislation: What it Means for You!

-Anne Tate

The clinical lab legislative landscape is complex with many factors that contribute to its complexity. The diverse nature of the lab testing industry, the evolving nature of medical technology and the need to protect patient care are just a few elements that make navigating the landscape challenging.

Let's review the current legislation and 'wins' for the clinical laboratory profession.

PAMA and SALSA Acts

The two most important legislative bills that are sitting in Congress are the PAMA Act (Protecting Access to Medicare Act (PAMA), signed into law on April 1, 2014, and the SALSA Act (Savings Access to Laboratory Services Act). Under the PAMA Act, labs are required to report their private payor rates, and test volumes to the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) who manages the Clinical Lab Fee Schedule (CLFS). This fee schedule is adjusted based on weighted medians of the lab data. However, the initial data gathered in 2017, did not accurately represent all types of labs, resulting in \$4 billion in cuts to those laboratories providing the most commonly ordered test services for Medicare beneficiaries.

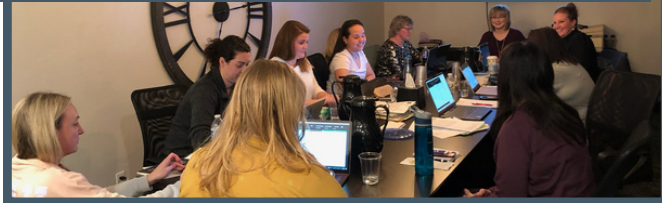


ASCLS MONTANA 2024 Spring Meeting
SAVE THE DATE: April 11th - 13th
Big Horn Resort - Billings, MT
"From Exploration to Innovation"

Mark your calendars for our Montana Annual Spring Meeting!
Take this opportunity to:

- Gather with your laboratory community and recharge your battery
- Get your PACE credits for your license renewal-recordings available!
- Network with our vendors
- Stay updated on government affairs

Room Blocks Available! SCAN HERE FOR MORE INFORMATION



The legislative response to the fee schedule cuts in 2018 prompted Congress to postpone the next CLFS reporting period and the subsequent fee schedule cuts. Since then, Congress has delayed the fee schedule cuts four times.

The SALSA Act, introduced in June 2022, was proposed to address the shortcomings of the proposed PAMA fee schedule by employing statistically representative samples of the entire laboratory market.

Additionally, the SALSA Act seeks to streamline lab reporting processes, reducing administrative burdens and shortening the time between reporting periods.



Decoding Current Clinical Lab Legislation:

Current Status:

In December 2023, the House of Representatives approved a continuing resolution with the goal of ensuring government funding. As part of this resolution, there was a provision for a one-year postponement of the impending PAMA reimbursement cuts, originally slated to come into effect on January 1, 2024.



Grei Sebastian, Senator Tester, Ethan Mercer

Why is the SALSA Act Important?

The significance of the SALSA Act lies in its role in mitigating the anticipated PAMA cuts, which could reach up to 15% of the laboratory fee schedule. With Congress postponing these cuts until 2025, the laboratory community gains a window to prevent these reductions and secure approval for the PAMA Act in the upcoming congressional session. Fee schedule cuts will impact every laboratory if PAMA goes into effect in 2025.

“As an advocate, ASCLS actively shapes the environment for laboratory professionals to maximize the efficacy of their efforts on positive patient outcomes. Volunteer leadership defines how the Society aims to shape that environment.”

Lab Developed Tests (LDTs)

In short, the lab either modifies an FDA vendor-approved product or develops its test to use for their purposes. Historically the FDA has exercised little discretion over most LDTs but due to the increasing sophistication of the lab market technology, the FDA is concerned about patient care risks. These higher risks include changes in business practices, shipping capabilities, and increased reliance on highly complex instrumentation and sophisticated software.

A LAB-DEVELOPED TEST IS A LABORATORY TEST (LDT) THAT IS NOT STRICTLY REGULATED BY THE FDA AND IS DESIGNED, MANUFACTURED, AND USED WITHIN A SINGLE LABORATORY.
-ANNE TATE

Current Status:

The FDA has proposed various risk assessment frameworks and issued a guidance document in 2022-2023 for public comment. No official rule has been finalized and lab stakeholders continue to engage with the FDA to provide feedback on the proposed regulatory approach for LDTs.

How does this impact you?

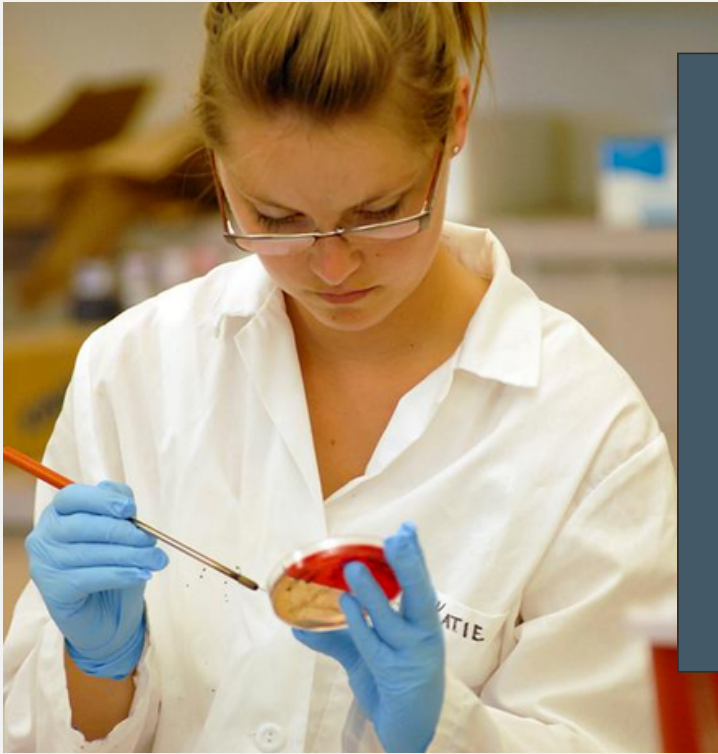
Increasing legislation for lab testing may raise costs and increase validation and verification efforts to substantiate the efficacy and safety of the testing. The ASCLS position welcomes a critical review of the oversight of LDTs but is concerned that the rule may impact low-volume and low risk tests that are created for vulnerable patient populations.

As a member of ASCLS, you will gain a support system of colleagues, resources, and friends who care about your success and progression through the medical laboratory profession.

- ASCLS Connect Community
- Continuing Education
- Participate in your state society
- Career Center
- Communications
- Legislative Activities



Upcoming Events



CLINICAL LABORATORY EDUCATORS CONFERENCE

February 22-24
Las Vegas, NV

2024 ASCLS, AGT & SAFMLS JOINT ANNUAL MEETING

July 8-12
Pittsburgh, PA

FROM EXPLORATION TO INNOVATION

April 11-13 2024
Billings, MT

- Montana MMLS Presentations
- J.O.B.: The Joy of Belonging, Ginger Johnson
- Persistence of MRSA in Healthy Individuals, Dr. Madison Collins



FROM EXPLORATION TO INNOVATION
ASCLS-MT SPRING MEETING
BILLINGS, MT APRIL 11-13, 2024

FOR MORE VISIT: www.ascls-mt.org

Call 4 NOMINATIONS

! 1-2 year terms !
Experience may vary
Get involved
Promote Medical
Laboratory Science

- President-elect
- Secretary
- Board of Director
- Finance & Audit
- Awards & Scholarship
- Nominations

CONNECT WITH US



LIKE &
SUBSCRIBE

WWW.REALLYGREATSITE.COM