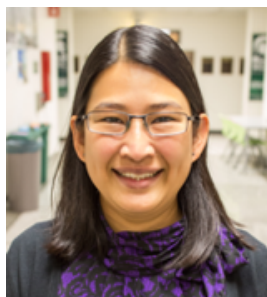


President's Message

Mariane Wolfe



Greetings ASCLS-MI members!

I think it's finally Summer here in Michigan! I started writing this during the state conference in Kalamazoo. It was nice to connect with you this past April! Special thank you for the conference committee to organized the event to keep us current and connected one another.

One of the themes that I heard from colleagues were workforce shortage. I would encourage those of you who are members to engage actively with ASCLS-MI. With the shortage of the workforce, it is important for us to work together to reach a common goal such as recruiting the next generation of laboratory professionals. One way to do that is to connect with your professional organization and work together. An opportunity that will be beneficial is attending the ASCLS Joint Annual Meeting in Grand Rapids from June 26-30th. It's an opportunity to network with individuals from across the country at a national level and check out ideas to implement for your laboratory.



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American Society for Clinical Laboratory Science,
Association of Genetic Technologists, and
Society of American Federal Medical Laboratory Scientists
Joint Annual Meeting



[Click here to register for a national meeting in our home state!](#)

As my time as ASCLS-MI president winds down, I continue to be impressed with accomplishments, like the annual meeting, our organization provides in ever challenging times. I would like to thank everyone who makes this possible and the many who have also helped me over this past year.

ASCLS-Michigan *Newslinks*

A bi-monthly publication of the American Society for Clinical Laboratory Science - Michigan. Deadlines for articles are the 20th of Feb, Apr, Jun, Aug, Oct, & Dec. Articles must have name of author. Anonymous letters will not be published. The editor reserves the right to edit all materials submitted for publication. Articles appearing in *Newslinks* represent the opinion of the author and may not represent the opinion of the society.

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for a complete listing and contact information for all ASCLS-MI board members and a wealth of other information on the Society.

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American
Society for
Clinical
Laboratory
Science
Michigan

Clinical Laboratory Science

A focus on what is happening in our profession

Featuring articles from Scientific Assembly Chairs or Board Members.

Materials from all members are also welcomed. Submit to editor. See page 2 for details.



Beware of Brucellosis - What do Laboratorians Need to Know?

Jason Wholehan MLS(ASCP)^{CM}

Bioterrorism Training Coordinator

MDHHS Bureau of Laboratories

In December 2021, an elderly man presented to a metro Detroit hospital with difficulty walking as well as loss of bladder and bowel control. Osteomyelitis was noted on MRI. The physician ordered Blood cultures, and a bone biopsy was performed. The patient stated he had traveled to a Middle Eastern country a few months prior. He reported that he regularly consumed raw milk from cattle and sheep while visiting this country.



Figure 1; Brucellosis is endemic in many countries

The CDC reports that approximately 75% of brucellosis cases reported in the United States are associated with the consumption of unpasteurized dairy products from countries where brucellosis is endemic. (1) Many areas of the Middle East are listed as high-risk. Often, cases of foodborne brucellosis present with systemic symptoms rather than gastrointestinal. (1) Systemic symptoms are frequently non-specific and most commonly include fever, chills, sweats, headache, myalgia, arthralgia, anorexia, fatigue, and weight loss. (1) Incubation periods can be highly variable - from 5 days to 6 months - with an average onset of 2-4 weeks after exposure. (1)

Brucella cases can present many difficulties for microbiology laboratorians, with the most pressing challenge being safety. Brucellosis is the most commonly reported laboratory acquired infection (LAI). (2) This is likely because *Brucella* has a very low infective dose and easily aerosolizes during laboratory manipulation. Unfortunately, these characteristics also make *Brucella* a good candidate for biological terrorism. Any suspected culture containing *Brucella* must be handled in a certified Class II Biological Safety Cabinet (BSC) using BSL-3 safety procedures. Laboratories should avoid using

commercial identification systems for isolates that cannot be ruled out for *Brucella* to prevent aerosolization and laboratory exposures. After safety concerns are met, accurate identification is the next hurdle. *Brucella* species are slow growing and fastidious organisms that do not react accurately in commercial biochemical identification systems. Often, they are not included in instrument identification libraries. MALDI-TOF identification may prove useful in the future, but currently there are biosafety concerns and gaps in spectra libraries. Instead, microbiologists are encouraged to follow the American Society for Microbiology's (ASM) Sentinel Level

Laboratory Protocols. The ASM Protocols list a few “Rule out” tests that clinical laboratories can perform to screen suspicious cultures. Whenever a slow growing, small Gram-negative coccobacillus is grown in a microbiology laboratory, the laboratorian should refer to the ASM protocols. For example, when *Brucella* is suspected, the “Rule out” tests include oxidase, catalase, and urea. See the [Brucella Identification Flowchart in the ASM Protocols](#) for more information. (3) If the biothreat agent is unable to be ruled out, the isolate should be forwarded to the Laboratory Response Network (LRN).

***Brucella* Identification Flowchart**

SAFETY: As soon as *Brucella* is suspected, perform ALL further work in a Class II Biosafety Cabinet (BSL3)

Major Characteristics of *Brucella* species
Gram Stain Morphology: Small (0.4 x 0.8 µm), Gram-negative coccobacillus
THINK BRUCELLA

Growth: Subculture positive aerobic blood culture bottle to:
 BAP, CHOC
 Incubate in 5-10% CO₂ at 35°C

Spot BAP with *S. aureus* ATCC 25923 for satellite test.

Note poorly growing colonies after 24 hours incubation on BAP and CHOC.
 Incubate plates for at least 2 additional days if no growth in 24 hours.
 Organism does not grow on MAC.

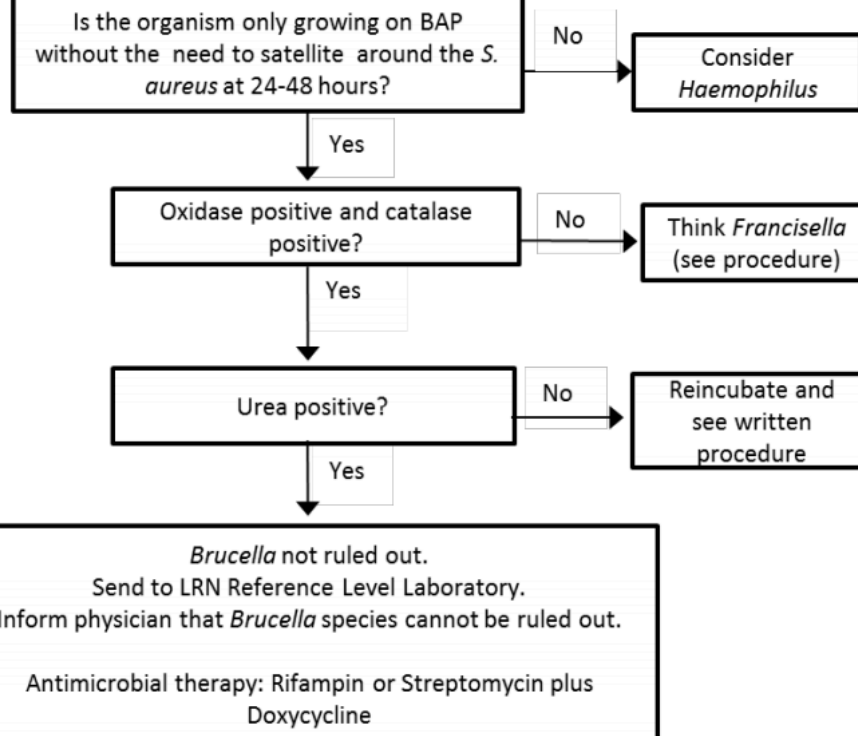
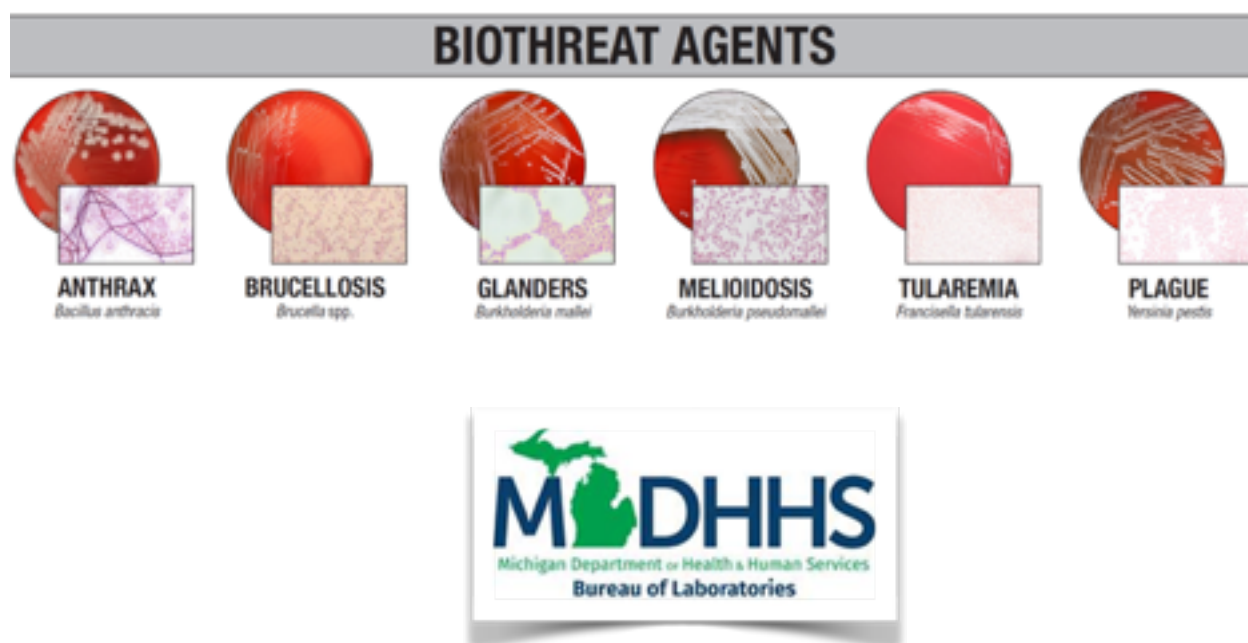


Figure-2: Flow chart for *Brucella* identification from ASM Protocol

In this case of brucellosis, the receiving laboratory identified the presence of a slow growing Gram-negative coccobacilli, and proper precautions were taken by staff working with the isolate. Due to the known risk of LAIs, whenever *Brucella* is confirmed, MDHHS epidemiologists are required to follow up with laboratory staff. A risk assessment from this case determined that, due to the decisive actions of the laboratory staff, the microbiologists had “minimal risk” of exposure to *Brucella*. The receiving laboratory correctly followed the ASM Protocols and were therefore unable to “Rule out” *Brucella*. They contacted the MDHHS Bureau of Laboratories (BOL) and arranged to ship the suspicious isolate as a Category A infectious substance. The BOL participates in the LRN as a reference level laboratory. As a reference laboratory, the BOL has rapid molecular assays to identify *Brucella*. The BOL was able to quickly return a preliminary identification of *Brucella* species, and, following a lengthy series of additional testing for speciation, the BOL returned a final identification of *Brucella melitensis*. *Brucella melitensis* infections are associated with the consumption of unpasteurized sheep or goat milk, which correlates well with the patient history.

The BOL is always prepared to assist our clinical partners. BOL offers free training for Packaging and Shipping of Clinical Specimens, so when your laboratory encounters a possible Biothreat agent, such as *Brucella*, you are able to safely ship the specimen for further identification. Training is also available for recognizing and safely handling Bacterial Biothreat Agents. The training covers recognizing cultures of the 6 major bacterial Biotreat Agents, such as Anthrax and *Yersinia pestis*, and the recommended ASM biochemical tests that are used to “Rule out” each agent. Please contact Bioterrorism Training Coordinator, Jason Wholehan MLS(ASCP)^{CM}, for more information. wholehanj@michigan.gov, 517-335-9653.

1. Brucellosis Reference Guide (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, February 2017) <https://www.cdc.gov/brucellosis/pdf/brucellosi-reference-guide.pdf>. Accessed February 2022
2. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Brucellosis, <https://www.cdc.gov/brucellosis/index.html>. Accessed February 2022
3. American Society for Microbiology. Laboratory Response Network (LRN) Sentinel Level clinical Laboratory Protocols, <https://asm.org/Articles/CPHMC/Laboratory-Response-Network-LRN-Sentinel-Level-C>. Accessed February 2022





Results of the 2022-2023 Elections and Proposed Bylaws Amendments



Stephanie K. Mabry

Thank you to all of our dedicated members who voted in various elections for our 2022-2023 Board of Directors and elected delegates to the Joint Annual Meeting. The results are as follows:

President-Elect: Kyle McCafferty

Secretary: RJ Benson

Treasurer: Julie Hall

District 1 Directors: Kathy Hoag, Angela Adamski, Lindsey Haveman

District 2 Directors: Roslyn McQueen, Allison Young, Claire Danielson

District 3 Directors: John Ko, Joanne Guan, *(1 Vacancy)*

Ascending Professional Director: Alaina Nido

Developing Professional Representative: Katelyn Farrar

Government Affairs Chair-Elect: Caitlyn Crone

Nominations Committee Chair-Elect: Christina Lim

Elected Delegates: John Ko, Caitlyn Crone, Kathy Hoag

Developing Professional Delegate: Talina Black

Thank you also to those who voted on the proposed [Bylaws Amendments](#). That vote passed unanimously. The change in number of Directors per District (from three to two) will take effect in the 2023-2024 membership year.



Annual Conference Returns to In-Person Format

Stephanie K. Mabry - photos by Ric Benson

On April 10-13, 2022, laboratory professionals, students, and vendors convened at the Radisson Plaza Hotel in Kalamazoo for the first in-person conference in nearly 3 years. Exciting social events that took place included the Lifetime Achievement Dinner Reception recognizing Dr. John Gerlach, various receptions with exhibitors, and a Celebration of the Profession reception. The Celebration of the Profession reception is the largest social event at the conference each year, and included award presentations, installation of the 2022-2023 Board of Directors, bingo games, and a silent auction fundraiser for student scholarships and travel awards, which raised over \$1,000! Thank you to our generous donors and bidders for this support toward our students!



The education agenda for the conference included over 25 sessions covering various disciplines presented by experts from across the country. We were especially honored to have the current ASCLS President, Dr. Hassan Aziz, and the current ASCLS Region IV Director, Beth Warning, speak during the conference. We also had topics on Ethics and Health Care



Rationing, Perceptions of Collaboration with a DCLS, Personal Branding and Career Development, Cannabinoid Updates, and More!



Finally, we were pleased to welcome over 15 vendors and sponsors to our event to share industry updates, career opportunities, educational information, and more. Our vendors are a key contributor to the success of the meeting each year, and we were glad to be able to resume in person networking this year!

Looking ahead, planning for the 2023 Annual Conference is underway, and dates in the first week of April 2023 are being finalized with the Westin Hotel in Southfield, Michigan. An announcement will be made to save the finalized dates and location will be coming out soon! We can't wait to see everyone again next year!

If you missed the Annual Conference (or even if you did attend!), don't miss out on the chance to attend the Joint Annual Meeting in Grand Rapids this June 26-30. ASCLS-Michigan is thrilled to be hosting the national meeting here in our home state and we'd love to see you there!



Awards Presented at the 2022 Annual Conference

Stephanie K. Mabry

At this year's 2022 Annual Conference, individuals were recognized at the Lifetime Achievement Award Reception and at the Celebration of the Profession Reception.

This year's Lifetime Achievement Award recipient was **Dr. John Gerlach**, recognized for his many years of service and accomplishments at Michigan State University, the American Society for Histocompatibility and Immunogenetics (ASHI), the American Society for Clinical Laboratory Science (ASCLS), and many other organizations and aspects of the medical laboratory profession. Along with the Award presentation, the celebration of Dr. Gerlach's achievements also included a thought-provoking continuing education topic "What's In A Name? Everything!" by Dr. Kathy Doig, which discussed the need and direction for nomenclature standardization of medical laboratory professionals.

Dr Gerlach is pictured at right with Kathy Doig (L) and Mariane Wolfe. His thank you letter to ASCLS-MI is posted below.



Dear Colleagues, |

I am humbled and honored to receive the 2022 Lifetime Achievement Award by ASCLS-MI. While I am not sure that my career warrants such an accolade, I can state that I have had many great opportunities and experiences throughout my career. More importantly, I have been fortunate in having some great people help me along the way. Donna Smith hired me into my first MLS position. Barbara Barnes and Betty Schoepke allowed me to assist with the skills refresher courses they were running across the state. Sharon Zabloutney hired me as a TA when I was in grade school and Bob Bull gave me a home for research and clinical practice. Doug Estry and Kathy Doig helped shape me as a faculty member and provided me models on how to be an administrator. I have also been very fortunate to always have bright and creative faculty and staff. They always had my back and allowed me the space and time to be engaged in so many areas. I especially want to recognize Ellen Rzepka, Susan Forney, Kelly St. George and Sarah Goodrich. With all of these people in mind, I again thank you for the award but I really feel it is for the group.

Respectfully,



**College of
Natural Science**

**Biomedical
Laboratory
Diagnostics**

At the Celebration of the Profession Reception, President Mariane Wolfe recognized a few individuals for their contributions to the profession.

First, she recognized the Michigan Omicron Sigma award recipients. First awarded in 1977, Omicron Sigma is the ASCLS President's Honor Roll for Outstanding Service. It provides lasting recognition of those dedicated members who volunteer their personal resources, time and energy to ASCLS. Recognition is at three levels: national, regional, and constituent society. At the Annual Conference, President Wolfe recognized the following members for outstanding service to ASCLS-Michigan as a constituent society:

- **Angela Adamski**
- **Caitlyn Crone**
- **Kathy Hoag**
- **Stephanie Mabry**
- **Kyle McCafferty**
- **Rachel Morris**
- **Michelle Russell**

*Mariane Wolfe (2nd from right)
With Omicron Sigma awardees
(L-R) Kathy Hoag, Stephanie
Mabry, Caitlyn Crone; & Kyle
McCafferty*



Next, she recognized the ASCLS-Michigan Keys to the Future. This award serves to recognize a new member, or a longstanding member who has recently increased their activity with the society, who has demonstrated their leadership potential to the organization. Each constituent society may recognize up to three members per year. This year, ASCLS-Michigan had 3 recipients of this award.

- **Angela Adamski:** Angela has been an active participant for the ASCLS-Michigan society. Her willingness to learn and provide input for our state conference with the PACE committee has been a great addition to the society.
- **Mattie Brechbiel:** Mattie has been involved in ASCLS-Michigan since she was a student. She has engaged members with a social event and in addition she has recently taken on the role of finance chair. Her positivity and energy to get our profession's name out there is an invaluable asset for the society.
- **Katelyn Farrar:** Although she is a newly elected board member, Katelyn has been eager to help and provide assistance when needed. She also has great ideas to keep current and new member engaged.

Finally, she recognized her Presidential Recognition Awards. This is an honor bestowed to individuals who have greatly assisted the President during their tenure.

- **Caitlyn Crone**
- **Paul Guthrie**
- **Stephanie Mabry**

While these individuals have assisted ASCLS-Michigan in various capacities, there are many additional members who have contributed to the profession who also deserve to be recognized. Watch for further information on recipients of the Member of the Year, Donna Duberg Mentorship, Pam Agren Inspirational, Joseph Miller Memorial, and Martha Roulund Membership awards in a future Newslinks, and as always, please consider nominating a deserving colleague in a future year!

American Society for
Clinical Laboratory Science



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