Greetings ASCLS-Michigan members.

I hope you have all been enjoying the Michigan Fall season and the changing colors. The recent events of late have brought many uncertainties. But you can be guaranteed of this: ASCLS continues to be there for you.

Last month, the ASCLS-Michigan Board of Directors met virtually for the first meeting of the year. We continue our focus on building a strong organization and have plans in place to ensure Michigan representation at the upcoming Legislative Symposium.

**Labvocate:** A core value of ASCLS is enabling laboratory professionals to function at their highest level. In addition to the annual meetings, did you know that ASCLS members have access to monthly webinars? These webinars offer you the flexibility to listen and learn at your convenience. Some of the past webinars included leadership development, convalescent plasma, and workplace resiliency. I encourage you to participate in these sessions to continuing your learning and building your network. The next session will be presented by Dr. Linda Smith and our very own Dr. Kathy Doig on November 18th. You can register here: https://www.ascls.org/education-meetings/webcasts-webinars/webinars.

**Labvocate:** In the latest edition of ASCLS Today, the ASCLS Governmental Affairs Committee (GAC) outlined some tips to navigating the election – reminding us to do our research and know the candidates. Elections are an important time for us to let our voices be heard and advocate for our profession, so don’t forget to submit your ballot and vote.

Lastly, I know that many of you continue to persevere through COVID-19 courageously. Whether you are a student adjusting to online learning, an educator mentoring future professionals virtually, or on the bench staying committed to safe patient care, keep resilient, stay focused, enjoy some cider and donuts,
2021 ASCLS-Michigan Poster Contest

Lindsey Haveman, Awards Team Coordinator

The 2021 ASCLS-MI Poster Contest will take place at the Annual Conference in Southfield, MI on March 29-31, 2021. Anyone interested in participating in the contest can find more information here: https://www.ascls-michigan.org/clinical-poster

Any questions can be directed to the Poster Chair, Christina Lim, at lim@oakland.edu

Lifetime Achievement Award

Lindsey Haveman, Awards Team Coordinator

Can you think of someone deserving of the great honor of receiving the Lifetime Achievement Award? Maybe they had been nominated in the past, but you still think their dedication should be recognized this year? This specific award is for someone who has shown evidence of advancing, promoting, and improving the profession or society over the last 20 year span. Not only will this person receive covered registration at the spring meeting, but they will be recognized and receive a plaque at the Lifetime Achievement Award luncheon. They and two guests of their choosing will be treated to this luncheon. Reminder, they do not need to currently be active within the profession; the 20 year span could be from the past. Maybe you read through this description and thought of someone fitting who deserves the recognition for the dedication and hard work they’ve poured into our profession over decades. If you believe you have a deserving individual, please send your nomination form to the State Awards Chair, Alicia Kuzia, at aliciakuzia@gmail.com

Follow this link for the nomination form: https://www.ascls-michigan.org/lifetime-achievement

All nominations must be submitted by December 31st so voting can occur during the winter

Board of Director’s meeting

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.

Membership: Join ASCLS-Michigan by visiting the ASCLS web site: www.ascls.org/membership/app.pdf

Non-Member Subscriptions ($10 annually) should be made payable to ASCLS-Michigan and sent to:

ASCLS MI Treasurer
5363 Drumheller Road
Bath, MI 48808

Advertising: Reach hundreds of Clinical Laboratory Scientists and students!
Advertising rates per issue:

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ASCLS-MI Districts & Committees: no fee for announcements, ads or any other relevant and necessary forms of information. 10% discount for ASCLS members.

ASCLS-MI Leadership: Visit our web site at www.ascls-michigan.org for a complete listing and contact information for all ASCLS-MI board members and a wealth of other information on the Society.

Editor: Paul Guthrie
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As we approach the end of an equally bizarre and burdensome year, I feel the topic of this Newslinks article arrives at an appropriate time—a sentiment I hope you will share by the end. Moreover, if you are reading this, I can likely rely on the assumption that you have driven on a road in Michigan, thus, the analogy is familiar albeit not comforting.

Since 1990, Michigan has never graced the top 50% in per capita public health spending, rather we have consistently ranked in the bottom 20%. In 2019, the state spent $25.6 billion on health and human services—70.7% of those funds were provided through federal operating grants, whereas the rest was covered by state revenue (e.g., taxes). A 2018 report conducted by the Citizens Research Council of Michigan went as far as deeming Michigan “terribly unhealthy.”

And, nearly one-third of local health departments service multiple, large counties—some in rural areas further encumbered by a chronic lack of access to nearby, well-equipped medical facilities.

These examples provide only a glimpse into Michigan’s disjointed public health infrastructure. Can a state continue to predominately rely on a fiscally conservative federal government—one whom consistently slashes national public health spending—for a substantial majority of their public health funds? This article serves as a call for deeper advocacy and unification between public health planning, response, and laboratories.

Public health thrives when provided the means to think outside-of-the-box, and—remaining within the bounds of CLIA—laboratories could withstand to be more flexible to help adapt to the sometimes-unavoidable creative solutions public health generates. On the other hand, the creativity of public health can open the door for misuse due to less rigorous regulations in place. From the Tuskegee Syphilis Experiment to the Cutter Labs Polio incident, public health has left a warranted wake of mistrust among those we promised to serve. Having experienced firsthand the power of a local public health system under duress as well as the streamlined efficiency of a well-managed Level 1 Trauma Center clinical laboratory, we should hold hope for a future that...
invests in and values both. For now, however, the issue remains an unbalanced predicament of too many cooks in the kitchen and not enough resources—funding, personnel, facilities, equipment, reagents, or otherwise.

Various contaminated water sources, a staggering opioid epidemic, a global respiratory pandemic, and mounting mental health crises—perhaps the Great Lakes State is terribly unhealthy with such dire public health needs. Yet, we have a dedicated public health and clinical laboratory workforce who can rise up to meet these needs and beyond. Which begs the question—what are we missing? In no particular order, these are areas that come to mind as essential when thinking of the betterment of our field:

- **Funding**
  - Addresses equipment, reagent, and personnel needs

- **Government advocacy**
  - Increased field visibility and potential for funding security

- **Equipment, facility, and reagent procurement**
  - Improved preparedness and response management and local health department coverage

- **Recruitment**
  - Expanded capacity across the state for all public health needs

- **Scientific communication and community outreach**
  - Build and maintain trust within and across communities

The 2018 Citizens Research Council of Michigan report called for a “health in all policies” approach which would implement assessing the health risks and benefits of new measures across all sectors—from infrastructure and education to criminal justice reform. It is clear our need now is greater and more visible than ever. For the first time in our lives, PCR assays and epidemiologic concepts are being discussed in-depth in the media. Our state’s health needs will only grow once the current pandemic subsides—the visibility must keep pace as well.

The ideas presented above are long-term goals which require movement at all levels across multiple sectors, so how can we as individuals begin to foster these concepts and incorporate them into the present for our future? Mentor a rising laboratorian—whether they are a student or new hire on your bench, through mentorship you can leave a positive impact on someone just entering the profession.

Write to your representative, congressperson, and Governor Gretchen Whitmer asking for a commitment to increase state public health spending—this can be as simple as writing an email or letter. Reach out to a local middle or high school science class to answer questions or provide a demonstration—in a world of Zoom-everything, this is easier now than ever before. Finally, take pride in knowing you provide a valuable service to the community—reach out to a colleague to say thanks or let a supervisor know they’re doing a great job to ensure their work is acknowledged and appreciated.

There is no reason why we should be unprepared in the face of threats against the safety and health of Michiganders. Political alignments aside, no governor should need to bid on care-altering assays and life-saving equipment for their constituents. No healthcare system should reach critically low levels of PPE or cleaning supplies. No frontline worker should receive a shipment of moldy N95 respirators. Healthcare professionals should not be fired and called whistleblowers for doing their job and reporting the empirical truth. If we treat this intersection like other roads in Michigan, it will take years to be repaired, if at all. We know what our respective fields are capable of—with a more reinvigorated and reinforced approach, we may have the road repaired in three years instead of six.

**References**


In a year with no ASCLS-Michigan annual meeting, it is interesting to reflect on the beginnings of our organization’s history of excellent annual meetings. Some 30 years after the 1918 influenza pandemic and 73 years before the current pandemic, MSMT, the precursor to ASCLS-Michigan, held its first annual meeting. Kathy Doig provided the description of their event (below) from the American Journal of Medical Technology 1947.13(4)208-9. The meeting was held in Grand Rapids at the Ferguson-Droste-Ferguson Hospital, a predecessor of the current Spectrum Hospital. The meeting included a week long refresher in bio-chemistry by Michigan State College (later to become MSU), with papers on a bacteriology topic and an update on serology testing.

I noticed the advisory board included a name from Kalamazoo, Dr. Hazel Prentice. I began working at Bronson Methodist Hospital in Kalamazoo in 1983 and vaguely recall mention of a “Prentice Labs” by some of the “old-timers” who trained me. In a Google search, I was able to find a memorial article from the June 1962 American Journal of Clinical Pathology. Her accomplishments and the high regard with which she was held are impressive. Dr Prentice was the first pathologist in our community and established services at both Bronson and Borgess hospitals here. She was an esteemed pioneer in our field.
I searched for information on the independent laboratory she founded. The last record I could find was from a 1970 listing of Medicare providers.
The Medicare directory listed the address of the laboratory. I checked out the location and today the site is a parking lot (photo at right).

Only a few blocks away from this former laboratory site, major changes to the Kalamazoo laboratory world took place this year. In the midst of a pandemic, Bronson Methodist Hospital moved all laboratory operations to a new building (see photos below). The location is the former Kalamazoo Gazette headquarters, portions of which were built in 1925. Dr Hazel Prentice would be familiar with this Art Deco structure designed by the renowned architect Albert Kahn. Other sections of the building are brand new. Inside the laboratory, she would no doubt recognize some of our equipment; for instance microscopes. It is likely the automation and technologies which have developed since her passing would fascinate her. Computers, molecular testing and so much more are things one could probably not even imagine a century ago. The future of laboratory technology is likely to be as unimaginable to us. As the lyrics from “Digital Man” by the band Rush declare: “Constant change is here to stay.”
Speaking of history, ASCLS-MI is looking for a New Historian

Suzanne Butch

Are you interested in history and think that we need to learn from the past? Do you wonder about the origins of ASCLS-MI? If so, consider being the next ASCLS-MI Historian. Your current historian has plans to move out of state.

Along with the responsibilities of arranging for a historical exhibit or event that features ASCLS-MI history at our Annual Meeting is the management of records that have not been sent to the Bentley Historical Library. Currently there are 5 plastic bins of materials. These include flags, pins, proclamations and the like.

If interested, contact John Ko. jlk889@gmail.com

For questions, contact Suzanne Butch. suzanne.butch@gmail.com

Nominations for 2021 BOD!

Kristin Landis-Piwowar

Have you thought about becoming more involved with ASCLS-MI, but not sure how? Do you want to develop your leadership skills, be able to network closely with other ASCLS-MI members, or make an impact on your profession?

Consider running for an elected position for ASCLS Michigan's Board of Directors. Being a part of the Board of Directors gives you the opportunity to promote the medical laboratory science profession, engage our organization's members, and develop leadership skills.

The Board of Directors is an elected volunteer group of professionals within the state organization that have various medical laboratory science backgrounds. Their roles include promoting membership activities and communicating organization updates to our membership community at large.

If you are interested in becoming involved, check out the open positions below. You can also learn more on the ASCLS Michigan Elected Positions Webpage

- President Elect – 1 year term (3 year commitment)
- Secretary – 1 year term
- District Representative – 1 year term, 3 representatives per district (see ASCLS Michigan Bylaws Article VIII for listing of District boundaries by county)
- Ascending Professional New Member – 1 year term
- Nominations Committee – 2 year term, 2 open positions
- Government Affairs – 2 year term

If you would like to serve on the BOD, know someone you would like to nominate for a position, or have questions about a position, please contact one of the Nomination Committee members or submit a Nomination Form to a committee member.

Kristin Landis-Piwowar: landispi@oakland.edu
Stephanie Mabry: stephanie.mabry@outlook.com
Sharon Ziemba: sharon.cls05@yahoo.com
Lindsey Haveman: Lindsey.Foos@spectrumhealth.org

Nominations must be submitted to the Committee by February 8, 2021