



President's Message

RJ Benson

How did I get here? I was lost in the health care system.

Literally.

I was seeing a provider in a building that I was familiar with, parked in the appropriate ramp, followed the walkway into the building and began my search for Suite 300. As the numbers counted down to Suite 305 the suites ended and I was facing a long walkway connecting the building to the main hospital. When I got to the far side of the walkway, I noticed a doorway with "300" on it. It was a gift shop. As I'm standing there developing a strategy, an employee asked me if I needed help. I told her where I needed to be and she directed me back the way I had just come and described windows/doors/changes in carpet as landmarks. I am back in the area I had just visited and am still not getting it. At least three employees came up to offer assistance. One knew the specific office was trying to find and observed, "They do a good job of keeping that entrance hidden." and gave me exact landmarks to follow. I did and got to my appointment 15 minutes early.

As I waited to be seen, I reflected on the people I had just encountered. I m sure that if I had ap-

proached a random employee and asked for help, I would have received it. The people actively engaging with me were trying to help a stranger. I think that is a trait I found in my colleagues in the laboratory and I began to wonder what brought them to be in that profession. Ask an accountant how they became one and you will hear something like, "I was always good a math." or "My family has a long line of accountants." Ask an architect how they became one and you will hear something like, "I was always curious about how things worked and wanted to build something." Pick a profession; airline pilot, plumber, musician, tailor ask they how they became one and you will probably get a mix of "I thought it was interesting/I knew some people that were in the field/ it seemed like a decent way to make a living."

Pose that same question to your colleagues. I'm guessing none of them knew what their job was going to be until they were done with training. Did you ever hear a colleague say, "Analyzing and performing chemical tests on body fluids was a fascination since I was a teenager." ? Probably not. How did they get here?

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I have a theory. I was recently sitting at the Red Cross snack station after a donation [I'll spare you the ongoing saga of their new hemoglobin methodology which almost prevented me from qualifying to donate a double unit. I advocated for a reconsideration based on my knowledge of the test system, got a retest and was reinstated]. The volunteer was a MSU student and we started chatting. I, of course, asked what her major was and she said Biology. I suggested that she look into the Biomedical Laboratory Science curriculum. I told her she would get plenty of Biology courses, have zero problems finding a job and it was a profession where you could help people by providing critical information to help them achieve positive patient outcomes. Her eyes opened a bit wider.

How did I get here? I remember being in grade school and was asked, "What do you

want to do when you grow and get a job?" I didn't have any experience or role models to draw on, but I knew that I wanted a job where I could help people. It wasn't until later that I started to focus on healthcare. I knew I wasn't smart enough to be a physician and there was no way I would ever be wired to be a Social Worker. My career turned out to be a nice blend of patient interaction while promoting positive patient outcomes. I was able to help in a meaningful way.

So, when there is a lull in the workload [I know it happens, I've reviewed records] ask your colleagues, "How [why] did you get here?" I'd love to listen in on the response.



**American
Society for
Clinical
Laboratory
Science
Michigan**

ASCLS-Michigan *Newslinks*

A quarterly publication of the American Society for Clinical Laboratory Science-Michigan. This newsletter is available on our [website](#), distributed via email link to members and posted on the ASCLS-Michigan Facebook page.

Intended Content

Member submissions:

Articles focusing on the medical laboratory profession are encouraged, including case studies, workplace activities, district events, committee reports, technology developments, awards and any other relevant and necessary information.

Non-member submissions:

Educational Institutions and Commercial Organizations: [Sponsors of Annual Meeting](#) will be recognized and may submit materials for approval by ASCLS-Michigan leadership.

Deadlines for articles are the 30th of the months of April, July, October & January. 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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Membership: Join ASCLS-Michigan by visiting the ASCLS web site:
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(<https://ascls.org/join/>)

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.



Empowering Connections: Highlights from the Women of Laboratory Science Summit & Labvocate Symposium

Kristina Martin

This past October, I had the privilege of traveling to Alexandria, VA for the inaugural Women of Laboratory Science Summit (WLSS), an event designed to foster dynamic and inclusive relationships among laboratory professionals. The timing was perfect, as it complemented the Labvocate Symposium I attended just days later.

The WLSS brought together a diverse group of professionals representing every stage of the laboratory career pathway. One of the most impactful elements was the emotional intelligence styles inventory assessment completed prior to the event. Each attendee received their results beforehand, allowing the facilitator, Trendy Elite Coaching and Consulting, to tailor discussions and provide context for meaningful conversations throughout the day.

The summit agenda was rich with opportunities for growth, including:

- Intention Setting Workshops
- Panel Discussions with Laboratory Leaders
- Strategies for Navigating Leadership Barriers and Boundaries
- Tools for Ongoing Leadership Development



The cherry on top of the event occurred during the dinner hour when a group decided to dine at the ever-popular [Namaste Jalsa – 4.5- Star Indian Restaurant in the USA](#). We were fortunate to have a henna artist on-site giving all the patrons henna tattoos in celebration of Diwali.



The food is always delicious, and you can find several laboratorians gracing the restaurant's social media feed. It was also fortuitous that I ran into broadcast journalist, television personality, and author **Hoda Kotb**, in the lobby of our hotel as I was headed off for an early workout. These experiences reaffirm why at-



L-R, Hoda Kotb and Kristina Martin

tending events in person matters. While virtual options are convenient, the relationships built face-to-face often lead to opportunities that flourish for years to come. Of course, challenges like budget, scheduling, and time off approvals can make travel difficult, but whenever possible, I encourage you to engage in our profession through these in-person events.

As mentioned above I was also in Virginia to attend the Labvocate Symposium. Amy Morris wrote a reflection piece in the Fall 2025 ASCLS-MI *Newslinks* edition regarding the key takeaways and calls to action. If you have a passion for advocacy, consider becoming a [Labvocate Ambassador](#). You can also stay informed by signing up for alerts on the Labvocate website. There's a place for everyone, no matter your desired level of involvement.

Clinical Laboratory Workforce

Everyone is fully aware of our need to continue to focus on the everlasting need to adequately staff the laboratory profession. There are several methods to help address this not only through acts of Congress outlined in the Labvocate links below that make it easy to engage with your representatives on these key issues. Other ongoing activities to monitor include the Workforce Taskforce of which ASCLS is a member amongst 66 other laboratory professions. <https://labvocate.org/workforce/>



Clinical Laboratory Reimbursement

Recognizing the flaws and devastating financial impact the Protecting Access to Medicare Act (PAMA) has had on the laboratory community and ultimately patient care, a new act has been gaining momentum. The Reforming and Enhancing Sustainable Updates to Laboratory Testing Services Act (RESULTS) is set to reform the Clinical Laboratory Fee Schedule (CLFS) to be more inclusive, less administratively burdensome, and set guard rails for any major future cuts. You can take action by contacting and engaging your representatives with a myriad of tools at <https://stoplabcuts.org/>.





MI Career Quest - Introducing the Next Generation to Medical Laboratory Career Opportunities

Allegra Bridges

On October 28th and 29th, Bronson Lab was thrilled to be invited to participate in MiCareer Quest Southwest at the Kalamazoo County Expo Center. Over the course of two exciting days, approximately 5,000 students from across the region filled the venue with curiosity and enthusiasm as they explored six dynamic professional pathways. These hands-on pathways included Professional Trades, Information Technology, Truck Operations, Engineering & Manufacturing, Natural Sciences, and Health Sciences. Students had the opportunity to engage directly with industry profes-



sionals, ask questions, and gain firsthand insight into the skills and careers that help power our communities. The event helped students envision future possibilities as they connected classroom learning to real-world careers.

Bronson Lab's booth showcased Medical Laboratory Technology (MLT), Medical Laboratory Science (MLS) and Anatomic Pathology careers

through a variety of interactive, hands-on activities designed to give students an authentic glimpse of the lab. The MLT/MLS activities included streaking for isolation with pictures of gram stains and plates, pipetting and aliquot-



ing, urinalysis dipstick interpretations, peripheral blood smear reviews, and blood type identification using gel card reactions. The Anatomic Pathology station invited students to examine different types of tissue under the microscope—an experience that quickly became a



crowd favorite. In fact, excitement spread rapidly throughout the event for students to go see the brain! Together, these activities offered students a memorable and meaningful introduction to the world of medical laboratory science.

A special shout out to those who made MiCareer Quest such a magical experience for students in Southwest Michigan: Charity Cramer, Frankie Upston, Inese Benks, Bridget Brueck, Allegra Bridges, and Amber Hagaman; Thank you for participating!

If you are interested in truly making a difference for the children of our community, providing them with guidance into their future careers, check out www.micareerquest.org for more information.



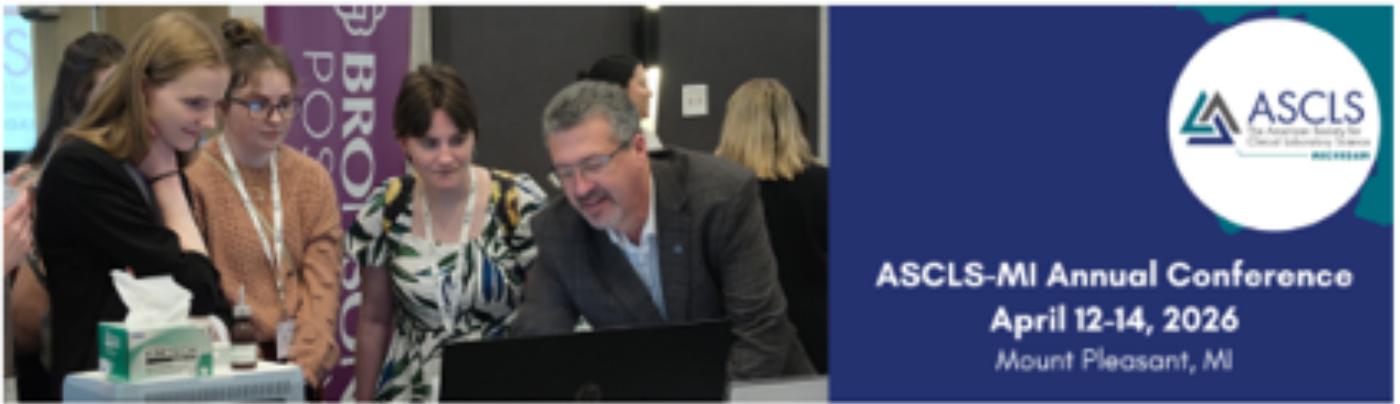
5 likes, comment, share, bookmark icons

kalresa That's a wrap on this year's MiCareerQuest Southwest! More than 4,500 learners explored careers and connected with industry professionals in health and agriculture science, IT, manufacturing, and more.

Thank you to all our sponsors, local employers, and volunteers who made the largest career exploration event in the Southwest Michigan area possible!

7 hours ago





Save the Date: April 12-14, 2026

The American Society for Clinical Laboratory Science - Michigan (ASCLS-Michigan) is the preeminent laboratory organization in Michigan, and each year hosts the largest conference for medical laboratory professionals in the state of Michigan. This annual event brings together professionals from all facets of the clinical laboratory, making this conference the ideal venue to connect with colleagues from around the state and build your network of professionals who share your passion for excellence in laboratory science.

The ASCLS-Michigan Annual Conference features continuing education opportunities, exhibitors, and a variety of governance, recognition, and other networking events. Continuing education sessions span a variety of disciplines, including clinical chemistry, clinical microbiology, immunohematology, hematology, general interest, and more. [See the full schedule of events here!](#)

Registration

[Online registration for the 2026 Annual Conference is open!](#)

Register before March 2nd for early discounted rate

Venue

This year, ASCLS-Michigan is excited to bring the Annual Conference back to the [Soaring Eagle Casino and Resort](#) in Mount Pleasant, MI. Located in the heart of Michigan, Soaring Eagle Casino and Resort features luxurious rooms, award-winning dining, the largest gaming floor in Michigan, indoor pool and hot tub, full-service spa and salon, and onsite afternoon/evening child care.

We hope that in addition to learning about the latest updates in laboratory science, technology, and equipment during the educational sessions, you'll also be able to make time during the conference to enjoy camaraderie, fellowship, rejuvenation, and fun with your #LabFam!

Room Block Rate: \$145/night plus taxes and fees. To make reservations on-line, visit www.soaringeaglecasino.com, select Book Now and use the group code **ASCLS041226** or call 877-232-4532 for reservations and refer to the group for Sunday, April 12, 2026. This special group rate is available until the cutoff date on Sunday, March 22, 2026 or until rooms in the block fill, whichever occurs first.



Meeting Objectives

Participants of the ASCLS-Michigan Annual Conference will be able to:

1. Integrate the latest technologies into clinical laboratory practice.
2. Use management techniques and strategies to meet the challenges of laboratory operations.
3. Correlate human pathophysiology and clinical laboratory data with disease states.
4. Network with peers and learn from the experiences of other laboratory professionals.



Continuing Education Credits

The ASCLS-Michigan Annual Conference offers a wide range of educational opportunities to meet your continuing education requirements. ASCLS-Michigan is an approved provider of continuing education programs in the clinical laboratory sciences by the ASCLS P.A.C.E.® program, which is accepted by the Board of Certification (BOC) Credential Maintenance Program and all licensing states. Each session is 1.0 contact hour.

Meeting attendees will complete session evaluations online and self-prepare their P.A.C.E.® Certificate of Attendance by using the online [ASCLS C.E. Organizer program](#). Further instructions will be given by session moderators during the meeting.

For Vendors

The ASCLS-Michigan Annual Conference is the ideal venue to showcase new technology during Exhibit Hours, promote brand recognition through Sponsorship Opportunities, or to make valuable connections during our Networking Breaks! See our [Exhibitor and Sponsorship Prospectus](#) for more information! [Registration is open!](#)



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Clinical Laboratory Science



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