



National Society for Histotechnology  
3545 Ellicott Mills Drive  
Ellicott City, MD 20143  
P: 443-535-4060 ♦ F: 443-535-4055  
E: [histo@nsh.org](mailto:histo@nsh.org)  
[www.nsh.org](http://www.nsh.org)

## NSH, ASCP Meet with Anthem Blue Cross Blue Shield

**NSH engagement** with the **insurance industry**, such as the meeting with Anthem, increases awareness of the impact of reimbursement cuts to laboratories, our membership and you as a patient. It allows for education and sharing of real life circumstances and can lead to more collaborative partnership.

NSH and the American Society for Clinical Pathology (ASCP) met with Anthem Blue Cross Blue Shield, Inc. (Anthem) on January 15, 2020 to discuss the individual payer's recent drastic cuts to laboratory testing reimbursement rates. Reimbursement rates are important to our members as both histotechs and subscribers. The Anthem footprint covers 14 noncontiguous states (ME, NH, CT, NY, VA, GA, DY, OH, IN, MO, CO, NV, CA, IA, WI).

Our meeting was in response to letters sent to Anthem in July 2019 and November 2019 by ASCP and NSH respectively. NSH's overarching concern is based on the significant negative impact the rate cuts will have on anatomic pathology laboratories, the medical community and the patients they serve. ASCP expressed similar concerns.

Beth Sheppard, MBA, HT(ASCP), Luis Chiriboga, Ph.D., HT(ASCP), QIHC, and Sharon Kneebone represented NSH. Kim Sanford, MD, MASCP, MT(ASCP), Jeff Jacobs, and Matt Schulze represented ASCP to meet with Sam Marchio, Anthem Region VP with Leah Timmerman, VP Provider Solutions and Carmela Pachino, MBA, RN on the phone.

We opened our conversation by seeking common ground on patient care and the need to contain costs, highlighting ASCP's program [Choosing Wisely](#). Anthem was very interested in the campaign which serves as guidance for good lab stewardship and is leading hospital based labs to work with interdisciplinary teams to minimize unnecessary lab testing or repeat lab testing use.

According to Anthem, the fee schedule adjustment was to realign the market Anthem services, providing customers a similar cost through the marketplace. Anthem declined to share how they determined their reimbursement rates citing proprietary information. Anthem representatives did concede that one of the big failures of rolling out the new reimbursement rates was not notifying and communicating with providers in advance of implementation.

Beth Sheppard shared reduced reimbursement and reduced fee schedules have an impact on patients in the long run. Sending or referring testing to large regional labs that do not provide integrated clinical care for patients or undercutting hospital lab rates for testing that will determine targeted therapies like monoclonal ab medications is short sighted, ultimately raising the cost of overall healthcare system.

When we asked why the new rates are so much lower than CMS, Ms. Timmerman stated Anthem doesn't use CMS as a guide for pricing structure and the marketplace has changed. It is unlikely that Anthem will reconsider the rate realignment.

Overall, we felt it was a positive conversation leaving the door open to provide data and information to the large individual payer on how proposed cuts or changes in processes may impact patient care and cause negative unintended consequences. NSH and ASCP will keep lines of communication open with Sam Marchio and continue to provide helpful information on the individual payer decisions impact on anatomic pathology laboratories.