



CLSA 2009 State Conference
 Strengthening Our Profession
 Through Partnerships

CLSA-Notes from the Prez Shellie Smith, CLSA President

Hello to everyone. Now that the Holidays are over, it is time to turn our attention to the New Year and the activities that keep CLSA alive. We are a volunteer organization that exists because of the hard work and tenacity of our members who foster educational opportunities and promote industry standards. The personal and professional development that our members receive enables them to become advocates, catalysts, communicators, coalition builders and leaders.

The licensure committee continues to work on legislation despite frequent problems. There is opposition from state medical societies as well as ambivalence from within the profession toward licensure. Laboratory managers feel they know how to hire and/or train qualified individuals so there is no need for licensure. The American Society of Clinical Pathologists' (ASCP) has adopted a position favorable to the American Society for Clinical Laboratory Scientists (ASCLS). ASCP supports personnel standards to ensure quality laboratory testing and promote patient safety. The licensure committee asks you to consider the protection licensure brings to the public by requiring minimum qualifications of personnel and a high level of professional competency. You can then support these efforts by contacting your legislators in Juneau.

The CLSA conference committee is busy working on the annual convention and has a great educational program lined up for this year. You can view the program by going to the CLSA website at www.clsaonline.org. I will meet with the BOD on Tuesday, April 22nd from 3:00 – 6:00PM prior to the start of the convention on Wednesday. The convention won't be all work; there will be social functions and a silent auction to benefit charity. I hope that you will join me and I look forward to seeing you in April at the convention.

CLSA Election Results for 2009/2010

Marcia Souser, Nominations & Elections Chair

On behalf of all the members of Clinical Laboratory Scientists of Alaska, we would like to thank everyone who accepted nominations for elected positions. In order to keep our state society active and running, we need members that are willing to actively participate. There were 120 ballots mailed out with a return of 59 ballots by August 7, 2009. The voting ballots were counted on August 9, 2009 with the following election results:

State President - B.J. Anderson

Secretary- Tony Gregston

First Year Professional - Callie Ashcraft

Central District Director - Kim Reuchel

South Central District Director - Greg Davis

Nominations & Elections Committee- Beatriz Boese & Alicia Morgan

Please join us in congratulating these newly elected officers and committee members for the year 2009/2010.

The Legislative Symposium was held this year March 23 & 24, 2009 in Washington D.C. In addition to ASCLS, CLMA, and ASCP, AMT joined in for the first time. March 23 was a full day of educational sessions to get everyone current on the 2 main issues facing laboratories, those being the Medicare fee schedule and Personnel Shortage. We heard how the “Power of Constituency” resulted in the repeal of the Competitive Bidding Act that would have been devastating to hospital and POL laboratories. Members last year had promised that the coalition of organizations would come up with an alternative to competitive bidding. Hence, the newly created H.R. 1452.

H.R. 1452 is the Medicare Clinical Diagnostic Laboratory Fee Schedule Modernization Act of 2009 and is sponsored by Representatives Stupek (D-MI) and Burgess (R-TX). This Act would create a negotiated rule-making committee composed of 21 members (19 voting and 2 non-voting (HHS Secretary & MedPAC Chair appointees). The voting members would be appointed from a defined list of stakeholders to include patients, physicians, non-physician providers, a health economist, hospitals, scientific experts, i.e. All types of laboratory provider settings. This committee would develop a modernized, consensus-driven clinical laboratory fee schedule to ensure periodic updates to reflect increased cost and new technology. The current fee schedule was established in 1984 with 1983 data and has not been subject to any fundamental review in the last 25 years during which laboratories have dramatically changed in how they do business including cost issues and use of advanced technologies.

The 2nd issue before us is the Personnel Shortage. There was a Workforce Investment Act (WIA) that provided Community-Based Job Training Grants supporting laboratory training programs that was suspended under the Bush Administration. In addition there is Title VII of the Public Health Service Act that had monies in both the stimulus legislation as well as within the HHS department. These monies provide grants to both students and training programs for prospective health professionals. Reauthorizing of both WIA and Title VII programs is before legislature this year.

Mary Lashinski, representing Region IX, was also in attendance and with me visited all 3 legislative offices. Our job as volunteer lobbyists was to “ask” for support of the above legislations for improving both Medicare reimbursement and staff shortages so that we can continue to provide our essential services. We were not able to talk directly with our Legislators but with legislative assistants specializing in healthcare. We found these assistants in all 3 offices very knowledgeable and receptive to our concerns and that they carry a good amount of influence with their bosses. Thus it remains to be seen whether the efforts of Mary and I will be rewarded. This was the first time for me to provide this lobbying effort in behalf of CLSA. I did learn a lot and felt I represented CLSA very well. However, the legislative process can be very complex and of course very “political” in how the business of passing laws is done, thus, there is much more to learn. As an additional note walking into each office was like walking into “Alaska” with all the art, photos, and artifacts present. Thank you for this opportunity to serve CLSA in this capacity and I will provide updates in future newsletters.

At the state level the Licensure bill did not get a hearing in either house this session. Both bills will be carried over to next year's session. CLSA members will be advised of any changes in status when the session starts in January. Between now and then, if you have an opportunity to talk with your State Senator or Representative at a formal meeting or informal setting ask them to vote for the Licensure bill next session.

Nominations Open for May 2009 Election Ballot

Marcia Souser, N&E Chair

Nominations are now being accepted for positions that will be coming open August 1, 2009. The nomination period will close at the end of the Membership General Meeting to be held Thursday, May 7th.. There will still be an opportunity for a write-in vote on the mailed ballots, which will go out in late May 2009.

The list of CLSA positions up for election in Spring 2009 are:

President (1 year as President/1year Past Pres)	2 year commitment
President Elect	3 year commitment
Secretary	2 year commitment
First Year Professional	2 year commitment
South Central District Director	3 year commitment
Central District Director	3 year commitment
Nominations & Elections Committee (2 positions)	1 year commitment

Anyone interested in submitting a nomination of a another member or themselves can contact Marcia Souser, Nominations & Elections Chair, at marcia.souser@providence.org. All nominees will be asked to submit a short bio which will be included with the mailed ballot.

CLSA Silent Auction Fundraiser to Benefit UAA MLT Program

This year at the 2009 CLSA Annual State Conference, we will host a fundraising activity to benefit the University of Alaska Anchorage Medical Laboratory Technology Program . The MLT department provides education and training in partnership with clinical laboratories throughout the state. Programs offered at UAA include: Occupational Endorsements for Phlebotomist and Clinical Assistant, Associate of Applied Sciences in Medical Laboratory Technology, and Bachelor of Science in Medical Technology.

The Alaska Legislature has approved funding for Phase I of a new Health Science Complex. The MLT department will have a classroom and student laboratory in the new building. This will allow the program to increase course capacity from 14 to 20 students. Due to the limited number of clinical training sites in Alaska, the MLT Department plans to include a Core Laboratory as part of the student laboratory. Providing simulations in the Core Lab will reduce the number of hours of training required at the clinical sites for each student allowing more students to be trained. Proceeds from our CLSA silent auction will be used to purchase laboratory equipment for the MLT student laboratory in the new building.

We have been gathering many different craft items, gift certificates and unique Alaskan gifts to place in the silent auction that will be held Wednesday, May 6th. The student MLT club has especially worked hard to gather items for this event. In the past, this activity has been very successful and a lot of fun! So, plan on attending this year's silent auction and enjoying the social and networking activities, where there is much to be gained and a unique opportunity to give something special to the UAA Medical Laboratory Technology Program. With our current and ever-increasing shortage of laboratory personnel throughout the nation, the UAA MLT program here in Alaska provides an important source of well trained graduates to keep our laboratories properly staffed. * More information on the Phase I Health Science Complex can be found on pages 4 and 5.*



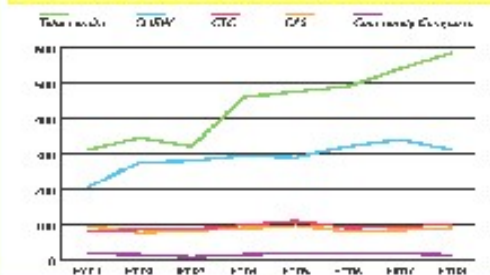
Health Sciences Building Groundbreaking

Program Growth

UAA has developed an outstanding reputation for being Alaska's "health campus." The University offers an array of programs relating to the health sciences, from occupational endorsements to master's degrees to M.D.s through the WWAMI program. Examples of growth and demand include:

- 81 percent growth in the Allied Health programs in the last six years.
- 68 percent enrollment growth in all health programs (more than 70) at the University of Alaska campuses since 2001.
- 125 percent more admission slots in the two basic RN programs at UAA's School of Nursing since 2002.
- An increase of the WWAMI program's admission slots in 2007 from 10 to 20 students per year.

Annual number of awards in health fields at UAA



UAA's Health Science Building

- The 62,500 gross-square-foot building, which will be situated next to Providence Alaska Medical Center off of Piper Road, will deliver state-of-the-art training to students.
- The new Health Sciences Building will be three stories and will house the medical, nursing, clinical laboratory and physician assistant programs.
- Classrooms and student services will be located on the ground floor; instructional laboratories on the second level, with faculty and staff offices on the top floor.

Health Sciences Building Features

Some of the Health Sciences Building features will include:

- distance classrooms to connect students from rural communities;
- interactive simulation labs;
- clinical and instructional labs and classrooms;
- instructional spaces designed for interactive learning and collaborative hands-on experiences.

Project Goals and Objectives

- Establish a health science campus with state-of-the-art technology to serve the State.
- Produce a sustainable facility to promote health.
- Enhance the perception of the university as a quality institution to attract and retain students in Alaska.

Anchorage Hilton

The meeting was called to order at 10:35 pm by Shellie Smith.

A review of attendees indicated that a quorum was present.

Minutes from the 2007 Business Meeting

The minutes to the 2005 Business meeting were read.

Jill Jefson motioned to accept the minutes with corrections. Alicia Morgan seconded the motion.

A vote was taken. All were in favor.

Treasurer's report: Irene Hemphill

Balances- Checking \$18,083.78
SMM \$28,293.19
Total \$46,376.97

Balances as of 3-31-08 and do not reflect any recent deposits/withdrawals from the month of April.

- Irene notes a loss off \$4000.00 every year for the last 2 years.
- The budget was cut to bare bones during the Fall 2007 Board of Director's meeting.
- Suggestions for grant applications should be submitted to the Board of Director's. The Alaska 50th Anniversary may offer some grant opportunities.

Discussion followed regarding:

- Conference attendance: We have been holding steady with 120-150 attendees.
- Exhibitor fees: Most conference income is received from the vendors. General consensus was to not increase vendor fees at this time.
- Two day conference: It was suggested to decrease our conference to a two day event since attendance tends to be low on the last day.
- Joint conference: It was suggested to have a joint conference with the National Public Health conference in May 2009. We could also have a joint meeting with ASM.
- Irene is researching the e postcard which is an annual electronic filing requirement for small tax exempt organizations. This is due every year on May 15.
- The tax accountant highly recommends that we have a "Conflict of Interest" clause incorporated into our Bylaws and SOP's.

Jill Jefson motioned to accept the treasure's report. Pam Jett seconded the motion.

A vote by show of hands was taken All were in favor.

Committee reports.

Board of Director's reports were presented during the Board of Director's meeting. There were no conflicts or requests.

TAT: Marcia Souser reports that we have lost Alaska Scientific as a sponsor for the Turn Around Time publication. They had been paying for the printing and distribution of the newsletter. At the Fall BOD meeting, it was decided to publish the TAT via computer and it will be available on the CLSA website. One issue was printed last fall to notify the membership of this change. All members that do not have access to a computer should notify Mary Lashinski so that other arrangements can be made to distribute the newsletter to those individuals.

Bylaws: Due to the request by our accountant to have a "Conflict of Interest" clause, this addition to the Bylaws/SOP's will be made as soon as an appropriately worded clause can be created. We will also need to have a policy to outline how this is to be monitored.

State Licensure: Heidi reported that Rep. Crawford sponsored HB339. Heidi worked with his lawyer for three months to write the bill. This bill went into the HES (House, Education, Science) committee even though the more appropriate committee would have been the Labor and Commerce Committee. At this point, we have progressed farther than the radiology bill for licensure.

Discussion followed:

- ✦ There was a proposal that we should join together with the radiology group to push these bills through.
- ✦ Alaska Natives in rural locations are filing "exemption" resulting in very few people requiring exemption.
- ✦ National has set forth "Levels of Practice" that cannot be enforced without licensure.
- ✦ A suggestion was made to remove "waived" test terminology in the licensure bill. This is too complicated an issue for the bill. Once the bill passes we can define "scope of practice".
- ✦ Heidi urges everyone to write their senators. Nothing will happen unless they hear from their constituency.

Shellie would like to publicly acknowledge and thank Heidi for all of the work she has done on licensure.

Membership: CLSA membership is declining, we had 133 members in 2007, this year we have 122 members. This can hinder CLSA activities. State dues received from ASCLS is \$10 per member.

Discussion followed: A suggestion was made to have one day registration fee.

A suggestion was made to increase the registration fees.

Mary requested that everyone go on line at ASCL to update your personal information.

Mary has the "Beginners Guide to ASCLS" booklets available at the registration desk.

Everyone should pick one up, even if you're a long time member.

New Business

State dues increase: The Board of Director's proposed an increase in state dues from \$10/year to \$15.00/year. This increase would be for "active" members only. At this time, Alaska has one of the lowest state dues in the country.

Cheryl Kajden made the following motion:

"I move that CLSA active member dues for Alaska increase from \$10.00 to \$15.00"

Gloria Tomich seconded the motion.

A vote was taken by a show of hands. A majority passed the motion.

Awards

Shellie Smith presented the following awards:

- Gold Nugget Award
 - o This award is presented to an individual or company for contributions made to CLSA. This year the award was presented to Beckman Coulter for their continued support and contributions to CLSA. The award was presented during the Exhibitor's Reception.
- Omicron Sigma

Region IX	Marcia Souser, Mary Lashinski, Shellie Smith
State	Irene Hemphill, Sheri Kulhanek, Jill Jefson, Greg Davis, Tony Gregston, Heidi Mannion, Susan Myers, Asako Mizobe
Member of the Year	Marcia Souser
Volunteer of the Year	Teresa Johnson
Keys to the Future	Tony Gregston, Stuart Frushour, Gloria Tomich

Call for Nominations

Gloria Tomich opened the floor for nominations for the following positions:

Nomination will remain open until May 4. Contact Gloria Tomich with additional nominations.

President-Elect	Pam Jett
Treasurer	Irene Hemphill
District Director-Southeast	Betty Jo Whitcomb
Nominations and Elections	Tony Gregston Steve Pyle

Results of mailed ballots indicated the following new officers were elected by the CLSA membership:

President-Elect	Pam Jett
Treasurer	Irene Hemphill
District Director-Southeast	Betty Jo Whitcomb
Nominations and Elections	Tony Gregston & Steve Pyle

Adjournment:

Sue Myers motioned to adjourn.

Steve Pyle seconded the motion.

All were in favor as indicated by a shoe of hands

The meeting was adjourned at 1200 noon.

Industry Perspective

UPDATE ON EQUIPMENT SERVICE IN ALASKA By Del Salyer, President, Alaska Scientific, Inc.

With the national economy in the doldrums, U.S. lab equipment manufacturers find their customers holding back on purchases. At the same time, increased fuel costs have driven up the price of airline tickets, which in turn have pushed up the cost of service to remote spots such as our Greatland.

Some manufacturers have decided it's too expensive to support analyzers here, so they have pulled out completely. Liz Ortiz Camacho at Alaska Native Hospital described how a company pulled their local service about two years ago, saying the technician who formerly worked for this company now works for an alternate company they have purchased equipment from. Constance Stager from Maniilaq Hospital in Kotzebue reports she switched one of her chemistry analyzers to another instrument because of service delays - after the former company discontinued local service it took two or three days to get a technician here. Other techs report delays getting parts to the bush because many manufacturers insist on using Fed Ex, which of course hands everything off the Post Office for delivery outside Anchorage.

At least one company has decided to cherry pick our state and only service Anchorage and Fairbanks, ignoring everyone else. The company took back an analyzer they had shipped to Yukon Kuskokwim Health Corporation for placement in their Hooper Bay clinic. When it was pointed out this would be an unpopular move, they agreed to reconsider, but as of this printing there are no changes in this company's policy to report.

After phoning local labs, it appears there are only 3 companies left with service "boots on the ground" and living in Alaska. Hospitals with deep pockets cope by buying two analyzers of the same model; and while expensive, it works as a backup strategy. Other lab techs keep a supply of spare parts and have developed the proficiency with the screwdriver, though Sharlane Donaldson of Crossroads Medical Center points out, new more restrictive regulations have cramped her style in that regard.

Possible relief may be coming via the Internet, as we will see instrumentation with remote diagnostics capability. Also there are smaller analyzers coming that can be swapped out for service by mail, but they may encounter obstacles such as the ten-day validation period for a new analyzer. So at this point it seems as usual there are more questions than answers, and for the foreseeable future service will remain critical when making your new equipment decisions.

ASCP Offers Weblink Updates on the Human Swine Flu

The ASCP is offering the general public and ASCP members a list of helpful links about human swine influenza at www.ascp.org. As new information becomes available, the information and guidance for the Swine Influenza outbreak is being updated frequently and posted on the CDC Swine Influenza (Swine Flu) website: <http://www.cdc.gov/swineflu/>

Check back as more information is posted and also visit the [ASCP Facebook page](#) to tell us what's happening on the ground and follow us on Twitter at www.twitter.com/ASCP_Chicago to get the latest.

**CLINICAL LABORATORY
SCIENTISTS OF ALASKA**

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We're on the WEB!!!

State

www.clsaonline.org

Regional

www.ASCLSR9.org

National www.ascls.org

CONFERENCE ISSUE

This special conference issue of the TAT has been published for you courtesy of Del Salyer, President of Alaska Scientific, Inc.



Inside this issue, be sure to check out the info on the CLSA Silent Auction. There are important articles regarding the current legislative issues of our profession and why we need you as members. Our 2008 General Meeting Minutes are also included for you to review prior to the meeting on Thursday, May 7th.