



# THE BAYOU TECH

NEWSLETTER OF THE LOUISIANA SOCIETY FOR CLINICAL LABORATORY SCIENCE  
FEBRUARY 2022

The ASCLS-MS and LSCLS constituent societies have been cohosting their annual meeting for several years. The societies alternate which state hosts the meeting each year, and we share knowledge, labor, attendees, profits, student bowls, volunteers, etc.

As many will agree, the past 18 months have been very trying. Our 2020 meeting scheduled to be held in Jackson, MS was canceled due to the pandemic. In 2021, LSCLS was scheduled to host the first tristate meeting with ASCLS-MS, TACLS and LSCLS. Unfortunately, TACLS was unable to participate due to outstanding commitments from their 2020 meeting. However, meeting planning resumed with strategies to still host the meeting with only LSCLS and ASCLS-MS. But alas, SARS-CoV-2 case numbers continued to rise, so the meeting had to be rescheduled for 2022.

We are confident that 2022 will be our year!

We are very excited to announce that the 2022 Bistate Meeting will be held April 19-22<sup>nd</sup> in New Orleans, LA at the JW Marriott located at 614 Canal Street. This location is ideal for enjoying everything that New Orleans has to offer. It is across the street from the upriver boundary of the French Quarter, and the infamous Palace Café is within a few steps from the hotel. You can also hop on a streetcar in front of the hotel and travel throughout the city!

You can expect southern hospitality, good food, fun times, and great education! In fact, our opening keynote speaker will be Sten Westgard from Westgard QC, thanks to our friends at Audit MicroControls, Inc. And as always, our MLS student bowl competition is guaranteed to be fierce!

So mark your calendars now for April 19-22 and come celebrate science with us in the Big Easy!

Submitted by: Karrie Hovis, MHS, MLS(ASCP)<sup>CM</sup>, CQIA

## A MESSAGE FROM OUR LEADERS

Hi everyone! My name is Luke Caruso, and it has been an honor to serve as your LSCLS President. I have been a member of LSCLS since I was an MLS student. I have attended numerous Legislative Symposiums and Annual Meetings, and I have served on the Political Action Committee for several years at the state and national level. I am wholly committed to this organization, and I can't wait to share my enthusiasm with you, together with our President-Elect, Melonie Falcon, who became President in February 2022.

Being a member of ASCLS is rewarding in so many ways, from enhancing your education to cultivating leadership and mentoring opportunities. If you are new to the organization, we would absolutely love to have you join. If you're already a member of ASCLS, make sure to renew your membership, especially before registering for our Bi-State Meeting in April. Join or renew your ASCLS membership today! Simply visit [www.ascls.org](http://www.ascls.org) to sign up or renew. For more information about the 2022 Bi-State Meeting, please visit the LSCLS website at [www.lscls.org](http://www.lscls.org). Here you can find registration details, hotel accommodations, and the educational program/schedule for the meeting.

If you have any questions, please know that you can always reach out. Remember that WE ARE THE VOICE for our profession!

Warmest regards,

**Luke J. Caruso MLS (ASCP)<sup>CM</sup>**  
luke.caruso@abbott.com

*and*

**Melonie D. Falcon, MBA, MLS (ASCP), CMQ/OE, CQIA (ASQ)**  
melonie.falcon@pathologyresource.net



**Melonie Falcon**  
**LSCLS President**  
**2022-2023**

# Let The Good Times Roll!

**2022** BISTATE  
MEETING  
NEW ORLEANS, LA  
CELEBRATING THE VOODOO WE DO!

April 19 – 22, 2022  
JW Marriott New Orleans  
614 Canal Street

# LABORATORY NEWS

The 2021 ASCLS Legislative Symposium was held October 25-26 in Washington, D.C. Louisiana had 4 members attending: Cheyenne Reyes attended on site and Melonie Falcon, Judy Garic and Cheryl Caskey attended virtually. Members from all associations met with their Representatives and Senators on Capitol Hill as a unified front on behalf of our profession to provide a visible, informed voice and make our concerns known inside Congress. There were two main issues addressed this year:

## 1. Clinical Laboratory Medicare Reimbursement

Congress was urged to fix the flawed implementation of Section 216 of the Protecting Access to Medicare Act (PAMA). Continuing laboratory fee cuts, mounting labor costs, and the added workload created by the COVID-19 pandemic have been devastating to the clinical laboratories in the U.S. Immediate action is needed before the end of the year to delay additional cuts further complicating access to essential clinical laboratory services to Medicare beneficiaries.

Attendees lobbied House and Senate members to ask CMS to delay the additional cut to the Clinical Laboratory Fee Schedule (CLFS) scheduled to go into effect January 1, 2022 until January 1 of the calendar year beginning no sooner than one year after the COVID-19 public health emergency has ended.

Congress was also asked to direct CMS to collect private-payor rates from a proportional sample of the entire laboratory industry, to include representation of all independent laboratories and all hospital laboratories, including rates for unbundled inpatient, outpatient, and non-patient (reference laboratory patient specimens sent to a laboratory for testing) services. They were informed that:

- The sample must be representation of the laboratory market and all geographic regions served and consider different size providers in each market segment.
- The CLFS rates need to be stabilized, the burden of reporting must be mitigated, and Congress should increase the length of time between data collection periods from 3 years to 4 years.

## 2. Clinical Laboratory Workforce

The increasing population and the number and complexity of clinical laboratory tests are straining the profession, and the COVID-19 pandemic has heightened these concerns. The healthcare system must have an adequate supply of Medical Laboratory Scientists and Technicians to ensure access to quality laboratory services, but the current supply is already short of the number needed and is estimated to become critical as the U.S. population continues to age. The estimated demand for Medical Laboratory Scientists and Technicians will be 11% between 2020 and 2030. Federal grants are available for nursing schools and medical schools to address recruitment and retention of students, but there are currently no such programs in place for clinical laboratory professionals.

Congress was asked to enact the BIO Preparedness Workforce Act of 2021 introduced in the House October 15, 2021 by Rep. Trahan (D-MA). This bill is important to our profession for the following reasons:

- Permits Medical Laboratory Scientists and Technicians the eligibility for student loan repayment in exchange for at least 3 years of service in an underserved area in the areas of bio-preparedness and infectious disease.
- Establishes a federal grant program to assist Allied Health schools to recruit and retain Clinical Laboratory students to increase the availability of these professionals around the U.S. Such grants will also assist programs in recruiting necessary faculty and providing clinical laboratory training needed to enter the profession.

The House members and Senator Bill Cassidy were open to supporting these issue requests. A meeting with Senator John Kennedy was not scheduled. The ASCLS lobbyist, Patrick Cooney, was informed of the information discussed during the Hill meetings as well as the office responses and will follow up.



# UPCOMING EVENTS



## ASCLS WEBINAR

February 24, 2022 from 7:00 – 8:00 PM (EST)

*“C. auris: A powerful threat to public health right in our own backyard”*

Presented by Kerianne Fuoco, MHA, MLS(ASCP)<sup>CM</sup>  
of Jersey Shore University Medical Center

[Click here](#) for more information.

*P.A.C.E. ® contact hours provided by the ASCLS P.A.C.E. ® Program.*

## LSCLS/ASCLS-MS BISTATE MEETING

April 19 – 22, 2022

This Bistate meeting will offer an exciting education program, vendor exhibits, the MLS Student Bowl competition, a career fair, and various networking events

[Click here](#) to register.

[Click here](#) to reserve your room at the JW Marriott New Orleans.

[Click here](#) to view the Preliminary Education Program.

*P.A.C.E. ® contact hours provided by the ASCLS P.A.C.E. ® Program.*

## MEDICAL LABORATORY PROFESSIONALS WEEK (MLPW)

April 24 – 30, 2022

MLPW originated in 1975 and provides the profession with a unique opportunity to increase public understanding of and appreciation for clinical laboratory personnel.

[Click here](#) for more information.

## LAB WEEK RUN

April 24 – 30, 2022

This is a virtual race that can be completed during MLPW, whenever and however is most convenient for you! All funds raised will go to travel grants helping ASCLS members to attend the ASCLS Annual Meeting and the Legislative Symposium.

[Click here](#) for more information.



Follow LSCLS  
on Facebook!



# Mission Statement

The mission of the [American Society for Clinical Laboratory Science \(ASCLS\)](#) is to promote the profession of medical laboratory science and provide beneficial services to those who practice it.

[The Louisiana Society for Clinical Laboratory Science \(LSCLS\)](#) is a constituent society of ASCLS.

To enable its members to provide quality services for all consumers, our society is committed to the continuous quest for excellence in all its activities.

# See y'all in The Big Easy!

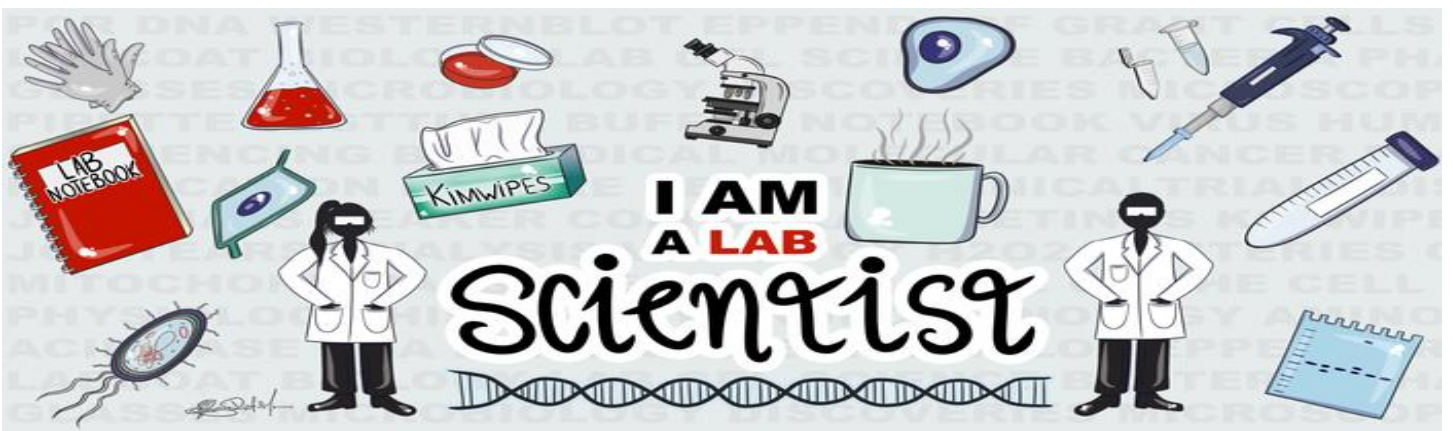


Photo credit: Stephanie Marceau Art

Follow ASCLS on social media!



#lab4life #ascls #lscls #iamascls #medicallaboratoryscience #healthcareheroes  
#laboratorymedicine #scienceiscool #chemistry #hematology #bloodbank  
#immunology #microbiology #hemostasis #flowcytometry #moleculardiagnosics  
#specialchemistry #urinalysis #phlebotomy #solvingpuzzlessavinglives  
#notallheroeswearcapes #labheroes #wesaveliveseveryday