

American Society for Clinical Laboratory Sciences-Illinois

ASCLS-IL Insights

SPECIAL NEW YEARS
EDITION

WELCOME 2010!

The Best of 2009

In this special New Years Edition of ASCLS-IL Insights:

The Best of 2009

What to expect in 2010

Ellen McGill Scholarship

By Robbin Killam

Benefits of Conducting Self-Assessments
of your Laboratory Quality System

By Eleanor Wolfram

What's Coming in 2010

Ellen McGill
Scholarship

Laboratory
Quality

Ellen McGill Scholarship

Scholarships for Active ASCLS Members, First Year Professionals, and Students

If you are interested in attending the March Legislative Symposium in Washington D.C. and will be attending for the first time, apply for a \$1000 Ellen McGill Scholarship. The application deadline is Feb 15. The scholarship will be awarded to an Active ASCLS-IL Member including First Year Professionals and Student Members. The registration fee and travel expenses will be reimbursed to the scholarship recipient after attending the meeting up to a total amount of \$1000.

Money is available for active ASCLS-IL members who are first-time attendees to the Legislative Symposium!

Apply Today!

The Ellen McGill Scholarship application information is located in this newsletter and also on the ASCLS-IL website. Please contact Robbin Killam at 217-788-3053 or kil-lam.robbin@mhsil.com if you have questions.

For Your Convenience, the application begins on the next page



Under the jurisdiction of immediate past president Lillian Mundt, many positive changes occurred in ASCLS-IL. We thank her from the bottom of our hearts for her service to ASCLS!

Officers under the new leadership of Elaine Nicholas were inducted at the state meeting in Springfield. We look forward to seeing Elaine's plans for ASCLS-IL come to fruition! All the best to Elaine and the newly elected officers for their continued dedication to ASCLS. Congratulations to all!

The state meeting was held in Springfield, Illinois. Members enjoyed the student bowl competition, interesting speakers and continuing education, as well as catching up with old friends and networking with industry professionals. Special thanks to Sherry Miner and the entire planning committee for their endless time and effort in planning such a successful meeting! Kudos!

The ASCLS-IL Insights Newsletter and the ASCLS-IL website got a facelift and was revitalized in 2009! Thanks to Nicholas Moore and Toula Castillo for their hard work and dedication! We hope to see more of it in the future!

We graduated 134 new CLS and CLT professionals in June of 2009. We wish all of them BEST WISHES on a successful future and we hope they remain active members in ASCLS!

CONTINUED ON PAGE 6

Ellen McGill Scholarship Application

This scholarship is named in honor of Ellen McGill who was a long-time medical technologist in the Chicago area. Ellen was an active member in ASCLS-IL (formerly ICLSA) and a past president. She was the Director of the School of Medical Technology at Illinois Masonic Hospital. This scholarship was started to honor Ellen's contributions to the profession.

This scholarship will be awarded to an active member of ASCLS-IL that has not previously attended Legislative Symposium in March or the ASCLS National Meeting in July to pay for expenses. Two scholarships of up to \$1000 may be awarded annually. The registration fee and travel expenses will be reimbursed to each scholarship recipient after attending the meeting up to a total amount (registration and travel) of \$1000. Receipts must be submitted to the ASCLS-IL Treasurer for reimbursement. Award recipients will be required to write an article for the ASCLS-IL newsletter summarizing their experience at Legislative Days or the National Meeting.

ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS AND INSTRUCTIONS

ELIGIBILITY: Candidate must be an Active Member INCLUDING First Year Professional and Student Forum Members of ASCLS-IL, in the society at the local or state level, has not previously attended Legislative Days or the National ASCLS Meeting, and express a commitment to serve on the ASCLS-IL Board of Directors.

REFERENCE: A member of the ASCLS-IL Board of Directors must submit a letter on behalf of the candidate describing the candidate's involvement in the society to date as well as his or her potential for future contributions to the society.

DEADLINE: **Completed Application and materials for scholarships to the March Legislative Symposium meeting must be received by February 15.**

Completed Application and materials for scholarships to the July National Meeting must be received by June 1.

AWARD: Notification of awards will be made by March and July. A letter will be sent to the recipient informing him or her of the award. Award recipients will receive a certificate at the ASCLS-IL Annual Member Recognition Awards Ceremony during the Spring Meeting.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4



Ellen McGill Scholarship

SELECTION CRITERIA

In order to receive full consideration for the ASCLS-IL ELLEN MCGILL MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP, the candidate must meet the following requirements:

- Be a PF1, PF2, or student member of ASCLS and a resident of Illinois.
- Demonstrate prior involvement in the society at the local or state level.
- Demonstrate the potential for future leadership on the ASCLS-IL Board of Directors.
- Application must be for a meeting the applicant has not previously attended.

STATEMENT OF LEADERSHIP INTERESTS AND GOALS

Applicants are selected based on their past involvement and potential future contributions to the society. The candidate will submit a short biographical essay which, at a minimum, should address the following topics:

- Past involvement in the society.
- Goals and interests for future involvement in the society.
- Ideas for the growth and activities of the society.
- Reasons for attending Legislative Days or the ASCLS National Meeting including what you expect to learn and how you will use that information to the betterment of yourself, your employer, and the society.
- Explanation of the need for this scholarship to support your attendance at the meeting.

Ellen McGill Scholarship

PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY OR TYPE ALL INFORMATION
(INCLUDE YOUR NAME ON ALL ADDITIONAL PAGES)

Full Name _____

ASCLS Membership # _____

Meeting Title and Date _____

Have you previously attended this meeting? Yes No

Home Address:

Street _____

City/Zip _____

Home Phone _____

Business Address:

Company/Hospital _____

Street Address _____

City/Zip _____

Phone _____

Fax _____

Email _____

PLEASE SEND THE COMPLETED APPLICATION AND REFERENCE LETTER TO:

**Robbin Killam
Education Coordinator
Memorial Medical Center
Department of Laboratory Medicine
701 North First
Springfield, IL 62781**

The Best of 2009

We honored thousands of laboratory professionals during National Medical Laboratory Professionals Week!
Thank you to the entire workforce for saving lives every day! You are truly appreciated!

Chicago was the host city for the national ASCLS meeting. Many exciting things happened including the long awaited merger between ASCP and NCA designated presently as the Board of Certification.

Under the newly formed Board of Certification, the laboratory professional will be titled either Medical Laboratory Technician (MLT) or Medical Laboratory Scientist (MLS).

The Levels of Practice white paper was approved at the House of Delegates meeting. This paper is a first of many steps towards a dedicated career ladder in the field of Medical Laboratory Science.

Our very own Paula Garrott received the distinguished Mendelson Award for her years of dedicated service to ASCLS and to the profession. Once again Congratulations to Paula!

Amidst uncertain financial crisis, Alpha Mu Tau members still managed to generate thousands of dollars towards the future of the profession, our students! Thank you, Alpha Mu Tau!

We elected Dr. Tim Randolph to the position of Region VI director. Congratulations to him and we are looking forward to his leadership in 2010!

Yolanda Sanchez and Toulou Castillo exhibited on behalf of ASCLS at the Illinois Science Teacher's Association meeting in Peoria. They made many contacts and informed high school science teachers about careers in Medical Laboratory Science. Thank you to both of them for promoting the profession!



What's Coming in 2010

SAVE THE DATE

ASCLS - ILLINOIS
STATE MEETING



DOUBLETREE HOTEL -- OAKBROOK, ILLINOIS

APRIL 12-14, 2010

Don't Miss It!

More P.A.C.E. credit!

Networking opportunities with hospital recruiters and industry representatives!

Centralized venue! Close to everything!

ASCLS and Collaborative Members: \$200 (3 days~ \$100 for Monday and Tuesday and \$100 for Wednesday)

Non-members: \$300 (3 days ~ \$150 for Monday and Tuesday and \$150 for Wednesday)

Student ASCLS Members: \$125 (3 days ~ \$85 for Monday and Tuesday and \$40 for Wednesday)

Student non-members: \$150 (3 days ~ \$105 for Monday and Tuesday and \$45 for Wednesday)

Benefits of Conducting Team Self-Assessments of Your Laboratory Quality System

By

Eleanor Wolfram, MS

It is my experience as a regulatory inspector that the hospitals and agencies that conduct team self-assessment activities with their laboratory staff have a distinct advantage over those who do not. Ongoing self-assessment exercises are like “mini internal audits”, which can provide a framework to engage in fruitful department dialogue while assessing the level of your quality system and processes. It can also be a strategic planning and benchmarking tool which helps to identify strengths and weaknesses of critical laboratory areas. And as a regularly scheduled exercise, it can create a common language for sharing, to help the laboratory department and other coordinating departments (such as, pharmacy, billing, etc.) within the organization identify and define organization-wide practices and trends for improvement purposes.

The team self-assessment activity sends a message of a commitment to learn and a commitment to listen to each other. These exercises allows both for personal and team reflection on “current” performance and “potential” performance levels.

Critical Review Areas

To simplify the process, the team self-assessment exercise can be performed during your staff meeting as an added agenda item under the topic of Quality Assurance or Quality System Review.

When performing the team self-assessment exercise, I recommend assessing the following 10 critical laboratory review areas:

- Laboratory Testing
- Laboratory Health & Safety
- Instrument Maintenance
- Instrument Calibration
- Documentation
- Facility
- Sample Control
- Supplies & Inventory System
- Policies & Procedures
- Communication

Perhaps, a few days prior to your department staff meeting, poll the team and ask them to prioritize and select 2 to 3 critical review areas from the above list of the 10. The selections will become that month’s meeting items to assess. Resist the urge to select more than 2 to 3 items. It is best to follow the old sage question and answer of “*How do you eat an elephant? One bite at a time.*” Keeping the items list short and brief keeps the monthly team exercise from becoming tedious and time consuming. Also, do not stay on any of the review items for more than one quarter. Rotating the areas of review keeps the creativity flowing and fresh.

The Recording Tool

Keep the assessment process simple by developing a brief checklist form outlining the review area (see E-X-A-M-P-L-E). Instead of using a rating scale of forced response choices, such as, we are doing “Excellent”, “Average” or “Poor”. Use open ended selection responses to solicit narrative feedback from staff. I’ve found that using the two options of “Suggestions for Enhancing An Area That Currently Is Functioning” and “Suggestions for Corrective Actions For A Review Area That Is In Need Of Improvement” works wonderfully. By providing these two simple response options, you would be amazed at how team dialog opens up. The “Enhancement” discussion activity allows staff to toot their horn for areas that they feel are already good, but can be improved upon. This activity supports the philosophy of continuous quality improvement (CQI). The “Corrective Action” discussion activity will bring the team closer together in that they will buy into solving the problem because they equally contributed to the suggested solution(s) for the problematic area. The following is an example of the paper tool to record responses on.

<p style="text-align: center;">EK Hospital Laboratory Services Department Team Self-Assessment Exercise</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Staff Meeting (Month) _____, 2009</p>		
Review Areas	Suggested Enhancement Step(s)	Corrective Action Step(s)
1. Documentation <i>(Topic: Electronic To 5B Unit)</i>		
2. Sample Control <i>(Topic: Storage Conditions)</i>		
3. Instrument Maintenance <i>(Topic: Written Procedures)</i>		

Let me suggest that each team member rotate each month as the recording secretary to jot the notes on the form for the team self-assessment exercises. This sends the message that the activity is truly a team process.

Often suggestions are filed away or buried in minutes once a meeting has concluded. Instead once responses are recorded on the above listed form, post the completed paper tool onto the laboratory department’s bulletin board as a daily reminder and review sheet for your team. Posting responses keep the team’s commitment visible.

The Investigative Process

There are many different types of process improvement tools that can be used for team self-assessment exercises, such as Brainstorming, Fish Bone Diagram, etc. I have found the Root Cause Analysis (RCA) tool to be extremely excellent for team self-assessment activities. Often you will find that inspectors propose using the RCA method to get to the root or cause of a problem. But RCA can also be utilized for enhancement projects, as well.

Because there are numerous books and articles on how to perform a Root Cause Analysis (RCA), I will not go into the method here. But simply said, RCA it is a “relentless” asking of why a problem occurs, and then continuing asking “why” that happened until your team reaches the fundamental process element that failed. On the flip side, when using RCA for your enhancement team activity, simply replace the “why” with continuous questioning of “how”.

Outcomes And Observations

Many benefits of regularly scheduled team self-assessment exercises have been mentioned in this article. One of the key benefits in doing these exercises is that it moves the laboratory staff from being reactive to a proactive stance in a relatively short period of time. What is even more fascinating is the shift in mindset from individual approaches to problem solving and enhancements to a team approach.

The team self-assessment provides great insight on which laboratory team members may need further mentoring and coaching. It also highlights the value of talking with each other and engaging in a conversation. There can be many "aha" moments realized - just by talking with each other during the team self-assessment exercises. It is often discovered that staff are doing much better than thought or that they learn new things about laboratory procedures that they did not know about.

What comes out loud and clear from these exercises is attitude. You will find that conducting team self-assessments leads to passionate calls to adopt an appreciative attitude towards proactively removing barriers.

Conclusion

Team self-assessments do change mindsets and behaviors so that staff feels safe to share both successes and improvement challenges. It also allows a time to celebrate each other's achievements.

Remember, each and every problem and/or enhancement project approached though team self-assessments can be an opportunity for improvement which invigorates your department; provides improved organization-wide functioning; increases patient satisfaction; and finally leads to better audits and inspections from external accreditation and regulatory bodies

Eleanor Wolfram is a regulatory compliance auditor.
Comments can be sent to: eaw60660@yahoo.com

ASCLS-IL is an affiliate society of the American Society for Clinical Laboratory Science (ASCLS) and one of five states in ASCLS Region VI, which also includes Iowa, Kansas, Missouri and Nebraska.

ASCLS-IL

AMERICAN SOCIETY FOR
CLINICAL LABORATORY
SCIENCES-ILLINOIS

ASCLS serves as the voice of all clinical laboratory professionals, creating a vision for the advancement of the clinical laboratory practice field, and advocating the value and the role of the profession ensuring safe, effective, efficient, equitable, and patient centered health care.

- Promoting the value of the profession to healthcare and the public
- Uniting the profession to speak with one voice
- Advocating on behalf of the profession
- Promoting professional independence
- Enhancing quality standards and patient safety
- Ensuring workplace safety
- Providing professional development opportunities
- Promoting expanded roles and contributions of clinical laboratory professionals to the healthcare team
- Increasing the diversity in the profession and expanding the voice and role of under-represented individuals and groups



Are you a student and struggling to cover the registration cost of the meeting?

Contact your student forum for help!

Rachel Seivert: rseiv2@uis.edu

Erin West: e_west12@yahoo.com

Erik Anderson: Erik_Anderson@rush.edu

Dates to remember:

January 15: Call for abstracts deadline for ASCLS 2010 in Anaheim, California

February 15: Deadline for application submission of Ellen McGill Scholarship

February 25-27: ASCLS CLEC in Biloxi Gulfport, Mississippi

March 15-16: Legislative Symposium in Washington DC