



American Society for
Clinical Pathology®
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July 14, 2005

Elissa Passiment, EdM, CLS(NCA)
Executive Vice President
American Society for Clinical Laboratory Science
6701 Democracy Boulevard, #300
Bethesda, MD 20817

Dear Elissa:

On behalf of the American Society for Clinical Pathology (ASCP), I am writing to inform you of a policy statement that was approved by ASCP's Board of Directors (BOD) at its meeting on June 24, 2005. ASCP's Commission on Public Policy (CPP) developed the policy statement, "State Licensure of Laboratory Personnel" after a thoughtful and deliberative process that engaged ASCP's membership and allowed our members to express their views throughout various stages of the process. Under the new policy statement that is attached, ASCP will, under certain conditions, support state licensure of laboratory personnel.

ASCP is aware that the issue of licensure of laboratory personnel has been a controversial subject within our community for many years. Within our own membership there are multiple views on the issue. Given these two facts, ASCP began a process almost two years ago to learn how our members view the issue of licensure of laboratory personnel.

In 2004, ASCP surveyed our entire membership and learned that pathologists support licensure of medical laboratory personnel by more than a 2:1 majority. Interestingly, the survey found that pathologists in licensure states, where laboratory directors have experience with licensure, were even more likely to support licensure. The full results of this survey will be published in the September 2005 issue of *LabMedicine*.

In 2005, ASCP's Commission on Public Policy researched the issue in great detail and began to draft a policy statement. As part of the process, the CPP asked all segments of ASCP's leadership to comment on the draft policy statement. Revisions to the statement were made and the draft was forwarded to ASCP's Board of Directors for consideration at the June meeting where it was approved unanimously.

We believe that the licensure of laboratory personnel will curb testing by other health professionals (such as pharmacists and nurses), by requiring national certification and continuing education by those performing medical laboratory testing. Moreover, ASCP believes licensure will increase quality of laboratory testing, based on published data, and will therefore enhance patient safety and the public health.

Two issues often cited by those opposed to licensure are that licensure will increase wages and adversely affect the labor supply. Because of our concern with these arguments, ASCP staff reviewed wage and labor supply data for “medical and clinical laboratory technologists and technicians” collected by the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) as part of the agency’s State Health Workforce Profiles. Analysis of the HRSA data reveals a mean of 109.73 laboratory practitioners per 100,000 residents in “licensing” states versus 103.97 for “non-licensing” states; however, these differences are not statistically significant. A statistical analysis of wages reveals a mean hourly wage for licensing states of \$15.35 and a mean hourly wage of \$15.06 for non-licensing states; however, these differences are not statistically significant, even when cost of living and median income are considered.

Finally, state licensure of laboratory personnel is an opportunity to increase professional recognition for the individuals who work in our nation's laboratories. This professional recognition could increase the recruitment of new individuals into laboratory medicine and promote the retention of current laboratory professionals.

At this time our plans are to examine licensure legislation that has been introduced at the state level by using the criteria in our policy statement.

ASCP is committed to working with you on this issue and all of the issues affecting pathology and laboratory medicine. Thank you for the opportunity to provide you with this policy statement. Please do not hesitate to contact me or Jeff Jacobs, ASCP’s Vice President for Public Policy, at 202-347-4450 for further information.

Sincerely,

LoAnn Peterson, MD, FASCP
President, ASCP

cc: Paula Garrott, EdM., CLS(NCA)
Don Lavanty
Susan Morris, MPH, CLS(NCA)