Washington State Department of Health

ELABORATIONS

News and Issues for Washington's Clinical Laboratories

Volume XXIII Issue 4 August/October 2018

25th Annual Clinical Laboratory Conference

The 25th annual Clinical Laboratory Conference will be held on November 13 at Foster Links Golf Course in Tukwila. This is an excellent opportunity to hear about the status of health care from a variety of experts.

Dennis Weissman, president of Dennis Weissman & Associates, LLC, in Washington, D.C., is the keynote speaker for the conference. He is presenting, **"Policy and Political Realities for Healthcare: What Labs Can Expect in 2019 & Beyond."**

For the clinical laboratory industry, 2018 has been a trying time on the reimbursement front. Medicare cuts of up to 10 percent for many lab tests became effective under a new market-based national fee schedule required by the Protecting Access to Medicare Act (PAMA). Even as the American Clinical Laboratory Association (ACLA) challenged PAMA in court claiming the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) exempted the vast majority of hospital labs from providing data to the government, it also set in motion a legislative strategy to get Congress to modify the law to mitigate additional reductions from taking effect in 2019 and beyond.

Meantime, federal oversight of laboratory developed tests (LDTs) remains in limbo with neither the Food and Drug Administration or Congress moving yet to take definitive action. Likewise, CMS is weighing industry feedback to its announcement seeking public comment on whether to revise provisions under the Clinical Laboratory Improvement Amendments (CLIA) relating to personnel requirements, testing standards, and industry fee structures.

Despite failed attempts over the past year to repeal the Affordable Care Act (ACA), administrative changes have been made that dilute the law by allowing for more short-term and association health plans that circumvent certain ACA protections starting in 2019. The end result will be higher premiums on the ACA exchanges plus the availability of more high-deductible and short-term insurance plans and increased patient financial responsibility. This combination will have direct consequences for healthcare providers including labs and pathologists which will likely have to collect more from patients and potentially racking up more bad debt in the year ahead.

Michael Astion, MD, PhD, is a clinical pathologist who is Medical Director, Department of Laborato-

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Inside This Issue

Practice Guidelines

The following practice guidelines have been developed by the Clinical Laboratory Advisory Council. They can be accessed at the LQA website.

Acute Diarrhea
Anemia
ANA
Bioterrorism Event Mgmt
Bleeding Disorders
Chlamydia
Diabetes
Group A Strep Pharyngitis
Group B Streptococcus
Hepatitis
HIV
Infectious Diarrhea
Intestinal Parasites
Lipid Screening
PAP Smear Referral
Point-of-Care Testing
PSA
Rash Illness
Red Cell Transfusion
Renal Disease
STD
Thyroid
Tuberculosis
Urinalysis
Wellness

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ries at Seattle Children's Hospital and clinical professor of Laboratory Medicine at the University of Washington. His career is divided among clinical service, teaching, and research and development. He was previously the Director of Reference Laboratory Services and professor of Laboratory Medicine at the University of Washington. He lectures frequently on issues related to lab quality, lab economics, and the appropriate utilization of laboratory tests. He is a founder of PLUGS, the patient-centered laboratory utilization guidance service, a 91-member organization dedicated to laboratory stewardship. He will present on the topic of, **"Trends in Laboratory Management and Laboratory Stewardship Effecting the Clinical Laboratory Industry."** This lecture and Q&A describe trends in hospital and laboratory management, quality improvement / patient safety, and test utilization management (aka Laboratory Stewardship) that directly affect your clinical laboratory. Advice is given regarding how to ride these trends toward a more successful laboratory.

Panel Discussion (Selected Case Studies & Topics)

Siu Kei "Jacky" Chow, PhD, D(ABMM), is the Technical Director of Infectious Diseases Diagnostics at MultiCare Health System in Tacoma. He will present a case study: **"A Bug's Story – Why always on a holiday?"**

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NOTE: Letters to the editor may be published unless specified otherwise by the author.

Website access:
Department of Health
Laboratory Quality Assurance
Public Health Laboratories

Scott Lindquist, MD, MPH, is the Washington State Epidemiologist for Communicable Diseases and Deputy Health Officer. He will present **"DOH Updates: Notifiable Conditions."** Dr. Lindquist will review planned changes to the notifiable conditions rule-making process including diseases, rule modernization, and electronic lab reporting.

Vivian Hawkins, PhD, MS, is an epidemiologist and manager of the Cross-Cutting Epidemiology program at the Washington State Department of Health in the Office of Communicable Disease Epidemiology. She has a doctorate in Molecular and Cellular Biology and a master of science in Epidemiology. Her presentation will focus on an **"Update on Influenza Activity in Washington State."** In this presentation, she will discuss the main components of the Washington flu surveillance system as well as discuss what components of the system are notifiable by law and which are available via voluntary reporting. She will also discuss work being undertaken to create new flu vaccines, and the increased effort to use modelling to predict flu activity.

T**awny Arensmeyer, MLS(ASCP), MS,** is the Division Supervisor of Lab Quality, Safety, and Point of Care at Providence Sacred Heart Medical Center in Spokane, Washington. She is a participant in the Washington State Clinical Laboratory Advisory Council. Her topic for the conference will be **"Special Pathogen Readiness - The Trials and Tribulations of a Regional Treatment Center Special Pathogens Unit Laboratory."** Special pathogen outbreaks such as Ebola and MERS are frequently in the news. In this session you will learn about some of the special pathogens of concern, how they are a potential risk to the public, what measures are in place in your region to alleviate these risks, and what every healthcare facility should do to identify potential risks of an outbreak in your location. She will also present a case study on the afternoon discussion panel on, **"Challenges in Implementation of Rapid Molecular Based Testing in the Hospital or Point of Care Setting."**

Kathy Lofy, MD, has served since 2014 as the State Health Officer and Chief Science Officer for the Washington State Department of Health. As the State Health Officer, her role includes providing medical and scientific guidance to the secretary of health and agency programs on a broad range of issues including communicable disease control, chronic disease and injury prevention and environ-

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mental health threats. Since 2015, Dr. Lofy has co-led the Opioid Response Work Group that oversees the Statewide Opioid Response Plan. Her topic for the conference will be, **"Addressing the Opioid Crisis in Washington State."** This presentation will cover the epidemiology of the opioid crisis in Washington State, key strategies state agencies are implementing to address the opioid crisis, and important issues for laboratorians related to the opioid crisis.

Who Should Attend?

- Laboratory directors
- Laboratory and office managers
- Department supervisors
- Bench personnel
- Billing personnel
- Compliance officers

The conference offers something pertinent whether you work in a physician office laboratory, an independent laboratory, or a small or large hospital.

Location

The conference is held at the Foster Links Golf Course with easy access from Interstate 5 and the airport. See the Laboratory Quality Assurance website for information and a **registration form** for the 2018 conference or contact Leonard Kargacin at leonard.kargacin@doh.wa.gov. The $95 per-person registration fee includes a continental breakfast, breaks and lunch. Make your plans to attend today. You still have time to register.

Ungraded Proficiency Testing Results

Your proficiency testing (PT) provider occasionally will not be able to grade a PT result. The reasons may range from not being able to analyze a sample because the instrument was not in use, specimen problems, educational samples, lack of participants or referee consensus, etc. Even though the PT company did not grade the results, that does not exclude the laboratory from evaluating the results. In most cases, the proficiency testing provider will provide a summary of test results, usually on its website, so the laboratory can perform a self-evaluation. Document the self-evaluation by comparing the laboratory-reported results with the statistics the PT company provides. If the result does not meet the acceptable range or majority of all users, the laboratory may need to perform an investigation and document corrective action. Remember that ungraded proficiency testing results do not equal unevaluated proficiency test results. You must evaluate them if the statistics are provided.

Approved PT Providers

Amer. Acad. of Family Physicians (800) 274-7911

Amer. Assoc. of Bioanalysts (800) 234-5315

American Proficiency Institute (800) 333-0958

ACP Medical Lab Evaluation (800) 338-2746

College of American Pathologists/EXCEL
(800) 323-4040

WSLH (800) 462-5261

For answers to your PT questions, go to the LQA website or call Nora Estes at (253) 395-6747.

Calendar of Events

Training Classes:

2018 Northwest Medical Laboratory Symposium
October 24-27 Portland, OR

25th Annual Clinical Laboratory Conference
November 13 Tukwila

2019 ASCLS-WA Spring Meeting
April 25-26 Olympia

Contact information for the events listed above can be found on page 2. The Calendar of Events is a list of upcoming conferences, deadlines, and other dates of interest to the clinical laboratory community. If you have events that you would like to have included, please mail them to ELABORATIONS at the address on page 2. Information must be received at least one month before the scheduled event. The editor reserves the right to make final decisions on inclusion.

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For persons with disabilities, this document is available upon request in other formats. To submit a request, please call 1-800-525-0127 (TTY/TDD 1-800-833-6388).

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