

Promoting Clinical Laboratory Science

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It is a Sunday afternoon, early fall, in southwest Wisconsin. The leaves are a panorama of colors. The weather is still balmy but forecast indicates a change is on the way! I am debating what message to convey in the Winter issue of *Clinical Laboratory Science*. So much has happened since September 11, 2001, to us and our secure life style. Life will never be the same, yet our workday has not changed significantly.

We manage the quality of laboratory testing and/or educate future laboratorians. It is the educated rather than the 'trained' laboratorian that will be the first person to recognize unusual patterns in laboratory results that could indicate biological or chemical terrorism. We hear of the need for doctors and nurses to be able to detect threats of bioterrorism. However, we do not hear mention of the clinical laboratory scientist. Why? It is the same answer as to why we are experiencing a critical shortage of laboratory personnel. Everyone of us has failed to promote our profession and make it visible to the public. Even today, we are waiting for someone to take the lead.

As an example, thousands of individuals donated blood and we missed the opportunity of explaining to the public just who is doing the testing and what is detected. We have pride in our profession yet we have failed to share this pride with the public. We must communicate to today's youth all the reasons that selecting a career in the laboratory is a wise choice.

A positive step has been the collaboration that is occurring with the various laboratory organizations in identifying ways to promote the laboratory profession to the K-12 group. Follow up on this requires involvement from all laboratorians. There must be activities designed to educate youth and the public about what we do and why it is so important to their health.

Next National Medical Laboratory Week why don't we all spend more time and effort on developing public awareness of the pro-

fession. We deserve to celebrate and treat ourselves but turn it outward and promote the profession.

We can become more visible through the written word, i.e., PUBLISH. Students researching articles, Web, etc. for school assignments could learn more about the profession if we published more about who we are, what we do, and what role we play in healthcare delivery. To do this requires that more clinical laboratory scientists write articles and publish them in the professional journal, i.e., *Clinical Laboratory Science*.

Clinical Laboratory Science provides opportunities for laboratorians, with various levels of writing expertise, to write and publish.

- Stage 1: Write a case study/short article for the *IN PRACTICE* section. Articles in this section are of the "how to" and "practical application" design.
- Stage 2: Write an article for the *FOCUS* section. The *FOCUS* articles are written around a central theme. Usually two to three authors collaborate on the series that is part of the Continuing Education section of the journal.
- Stage 3: If you have done research, either qualitative or quantitative, write an article for the *REPORTS AND REVIEWS* section.

The opportunities are endless, take the initiative for promote your profession and be proud to be a clinical laboratory scientist.

Carol McCoy is the 2000-2002 *Clinical Laboratory Science* Continuing Education Editor.

The Dialogue and Discussion Section is a forum for editorials, short articles, commentaries, and letters to the editor on clinical laboratory science topics and professional issues of general interest to readers including ASCLS activities and position papers. For more information about submissions to the Dialogue and Discussion section contact: Marian Schwabbauer PhD, Executive Editor, Clinical Laboratory Science Editorial Office, Attn: Dialogue and Discussion, PO Box 5399, Coralville, IA 52241-5399. (319) 351-2922, (319) 351-2927 (fax). cls@ia.net