



American Society for  
Clinical Pathology®

*America's Health Depends  
On Its Laboratories*

**TO:** Intersociety Pathology Council

**FROM:** LoAnn C. Peterson, MD, FASCP  
President, American Society for Clinical Pathology

**DATE:** February 27, 2005

**RE:** The American Society for Clinical Pathology

---

#### **ASCP and MEDSCAPE**

In early 2004, ASCP was asked by Medscape/WebMD, the nation's premier physician/public health information service, to develop a co-branded pathology and lab medicine web site. The new site ([pathology.medscape.com](http://pathology.medscape.com)) was launched at ASCP's Annual Meeting in San Antonio in October. The presence of ASCP on the Medscape site is particularly important to the Society as we endeavor to promote ourselves not only to our members, but to the wider medical community and the public, as well.

The site offers free CME credits, coverage of ASCP conferences and those of other organizations which have content relevant to pathology and lab medicine, journal reviews, book reviews, and news from many of Medscape's 30+ other specialty areas which relate to our members. The service is free to all and the initial reports of usage are excellent and confirmatory of our decision to join forces with Medscape.

The development of the site and continual refreshing is handled by ASCP staff and Medscape staff. An eight member editorial board comprising four representatives appointed by ASCP from its membership and four other representatives, including Dr. George Lundberg, himself a former ASCP President and the former editor-in-chief of The Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA) serve as advisors to the site.

This cooperative agreement has given ASCP an opportunity to keep our members and the larger medical community apprised of the Society's legislative advocacy efforts on behalf of pathologists and laboratory medicine professionals. Our site on Medscape also offers us the chance to reach an audience estimated to be more than 500,000 physicians with messages about ASCP meetings and products.

## **EDUCATION**

We encourage everyone to attend ASCP's Companion Society Program here at USCAP Sunday evening, February 27. Dr. Barbara McKenna will moderate two interactive exercises of self-assessment. We will also present a brief report on progress of the ASCP Resident In-Service Examination. The annual ASCP Resident Review Course provides a renowned faculty and is an exceptional value. The course will be given May 12-17 in Chicago. As further evidence of our commitment to Resident education, ASCP makes it possible for Residents to attend any ASCP educational course, Annual Meeting, or Weekend of Pathology for a minimal "passport" fee or no charge at all (standby status).

Although regional ASCP surgical and cytopathology educational courses still feature microscopes for review of hundreds of significant cases, we are increasingly incorporating the use of virtual slide technology – and doing so with great success. You can see for yourself at the upcoming Weekends of Pathology in Toronto (April) and New York (June). These Weekends are great opportunities for quick, practical updates in surgical pathology and complement the fall ASCP Annual Meeting.

ASCP and the Clinical Laboratory Management Association (CLMA) present the annual ThinkLab Conference and Exhibition in Chicago March 5-8. ThinkLab offers valuable educational activities in laboratory medicine practice. Our highly respected audio teleconferences in surgical pathology, cytopathology, and clinical pathology continue to be highly valued as a convenient, cost-effective source of professional continuing education in the workplace.

## **ASCP ANNUAL MEETING: PATHOLOGY TODAY**

Planning is well underway for the ASCP 2005 Annual Meeting, October 8-11 in Seattle. Bernard A. Harris, Jr., MD, former NASA astronaut, will give the Opening Keynote Address – a compelling presentation on the medical and scientific issues of long-duration space flight. Pathology Today offers pathologists a fascinating line-up of world-class faculty, cutting-edge topics and concepts, a wide variety of educational formats, interactive and dynamic courses, tons of networking opportunities, social events, and more.

## **PEPFAR**

ASCP and our members have been significantly involved in developing educational materials for use by countries in the Global AIDS Program (GAP). As background, a number of major initiatives are currently underway to treat HIV patients in low-resource countries, including the President's Emergency Program for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) and GAP. With funding of \$15 billion over five years, the PEPFAR initiative will focus on the most afflicted countries in Africa, the Caribbean and Southeast Asia.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has identified a need to provide immediate, as well as ongoing, training to 15 countries identified in the PEPFAR. GAP has been established to build capacity and capability to provide AIDs testing and treatment in these 15 countries. ASCP, working with the CDC and the Association for Public Health Laboratories (APHL), has created training materials for "Workshops in a Box" for hematology, chemistry and CD4 testing.

ASCP, CDC and APHL developed education materials in Clinical Chemistry and Hematology for presentation in Zambia last August. ASCP members participated in the workshops and gained a sense of needs for additional workshop development. ASCP members also traveled to Ethiopia and successfully presented eight days of workshops in chemistry and hematology to 60 participants.

ASCP is prepared to help meet the ongoing demand for testing during the period of rapid scale-up by providing basic training for laboratory health professionals in hematology, chemistry and CD4 testing.

### **ASCP BOARD of REGISTRY**

The ASCP Board of Registry (BOR) now offers certification for Pathologists' Assistants. The American Association of Pathologists' Assistants (AAPA) and the ASCP BOR signed a Memorandum of Understanding in October 2004.

The Board of Registry is also in the process of obtaining accreditation of its certification program through the American National Standards Institute (ANSI). The application form and all required documentation are currently being compiled.

In August 2004, the Board of Registry certified our 400,000<sup>th</sup> certificant. Several events are planned to celebrate this milestone. The Certification Maintenance Program has recently been implemented for ASCP certificants. This program is required for all individuals certified in entry level categories as of January 1, 2004. The program is voluntary for individuals certified prior to that date.

### **RISE**

The Resident In-Service Examination (RISE) has had another successful year. Not only did every residency program in the US participate, we also had participants from Beirut, Canada, and - new this year - Australia and Ireland. We are reviewing the comments from our international participants and making changes so that the program can be successfully integrated into most countries.

For the 2005 RISE, we have gained additional input from other professional societies. ACLPS and ADASP have been collaborating with the ASCP RISE committee to help ensure that the RISE appropriately covers those topics most important and relevant for all areas of pathology.

The 2005 RISE will be offered at two different times: May 1-15 and again October 1-15. We hope that by offering the examination twice a year, more residents will have an opportunity to participate. Anyone wishing to participate can email [RISE@ascp.org](mailto:RISE@ascp.org).

### **PUBLICATIONS and SELF ASSESSMENT**

Look for the rollout of an Immunopathology/Molecular Pathology project on AJCP.com in late spring. While this initiative is being overseen by Dr. Neal Goldstein, it will include a major contribution from Drs. Nadji and Morales who also have a book in production with

the Press, *Practical Guide of Differential Diagnosis by IHC/Molecular Pathology*. It will provide a practical and up-to-date reference of tumor markers and their sources.

Other new *AJCP* initiatives include the TOC (Table of Contents) e-mail that began this past Fall. *AJCP* reviewers now may optionally receive CE credit for the manuscripts they peer review. At the time each reviewer receives a request to review a manuscript they can choose to receive CE credit for this activity.

The ScholarOne Manuscript Central software is up and operational for both *AJCP* and *LABMEDICINE*. Other ASCP print products will be following suit later this year. *LABMEDICINE* has announced a Case Studies Competition for residents and other interested individuals. The first place award includes a 3-day expense paid trip to the ASCP meeting of the winner's choice, either ASCP Pathology Today or the CLMA/ASCP Conference.

We have instituted on-line processing of answer sheets for both the Check Sample and Tech Sample products. Subscribers choosing to submit their information on-line will be able to immediately download their CE documentation certificates.

New titles to publish this spring include the Mais *Compendium of Clinical Pathology* and the new DeMay *Pap Test* text. Expected to publish this summer is a 4<sup>th</sup> edition of Kjeldsberg's *Practical Diagnosis of Hematologic Disorders*.

Additionally, we are pursuing application to CMS to become an approved provider for cytology PT as soon as 2006. While this will be a huge undertaking for the ASCP, a survey of the membership indicated unanimous support for this undertaking. We anticipate that our initial application will be submitted this month.

## **ADVOCACY**

ASCP is stepping up our advocacy efforts to represent the interests of pathology and laboratory medicine, both in Washington and in the states. The Society believes the grassroots strength of our 140,000 diverse members represents an opportunity to advance the field's public policy goals as well as counter any efforts to erode our scope of practice. The Society's advocacy efforts on our priority issues are designed to unite pathologists, technologists and technicians as a laboratory team.

For example, a recent ASCP advocacy campaign was designed to unite the entire laboratory team around an issue occurring in South Carolina. ASCP worked collaboratively with the South Carolina Society of Pathologists and the College of American Pathologists to support the override of the veto of direct billing legislation by South Carolina Governor Mark Sanford.

Through our web-based *e-Advocacy Center*, we had a significant advocacy response from not only South Carolina pathologists, but also technologists and technicians who contacted their state legislators. The efforts of the laboratory team succeeded in overriding the veto.

Another priority advocacy effort underway at ASCP is the ASCP "Thaw the Freeze," petition drive, which to date has collected over 1500 signatures. The campaign is designed to raise lawmakers' awareness of the negative effects of the current freeze on

the annual Consumer Price Index (CPI) update for the Medicare Clinical Laboratory Fee Schedule. The next phase of our work on the issue includes asking members who have signed the petition to provide the Society with information on the impact that the CPI freeze has had on patient care and laboratory operations.

Additional issues ASCP will advocate for in 2005 include a fix to the Sustainable Growth Rate (SGR) formula in Medicare that is scheduled to reduce reimbursements to physicians by 5% this year and subsequent years, promoting direct billing legislation and countering fee splitting schemes in the states, urging the federal government to modernize cytology proficiency testing regulations, addressing the workforce shortage among technologists and technicians through legislation, and addressing MT/CLS program closures at academic institutions. ASCP is also committed to working collaboratively on advocacy efforts with the organizations that make up the Intersociety Pathology Council.