

THE CONNECTION

SPRING ISSUE

March 11, 2026

President's Message



By:
Samantha
Peterson

Is it close enough to say “Happy Spring!”, or is that still considered wishful thinking? Either way, I’m manifesting it... Happy Spring, everyone! As we approach the ASCLS ‘busy season’, we have much to look forward to in the coming months.

Our main upcoming event is the ASCLS-ND Annual State Meeting in Fargo, ND on Monday, April 20th & Tuesday, April 21st. We’ve got 10 exciting educational sessions planned for you and an evening vendor fair filled with food, fun, and prizes! More information can be found on pages 5 & 6.

If you live in the Fargo area and would like to be involved in planning, please contact [Alice Hawley](#), our incredible meeting chair!

We also have ASCLS-ND board of director elections approaching. See pages 7-9 to learn how to nominate yourself or someone else for a board position!

If you’re a student, be sure to check out the ASCLS-ND Scholarship & Developing Professional Applications on pages 10 & 11.

Finally, we have a special feature from North Dakota’s very first Doctor of Clinical Laboratory Science (DCLS), Dr. Michelle Steiner, who shares her experiences and perspectives as a DCLS in ND. Read all about it on pages 12 - 15.

I hope to see many of you in Fargo in April!

~Sam

Your 2025-2026 ASCLS-ND Board of Directors



PRESIDENT

Samantha Peterson, PhD, MLS(ASCP)^{CM}
Associate Professor
University of North Dakota
Grand Forks, ND



PRESIDENT-ELECT

Shannon Jongeward, PhD, MLS(ASCP)^{CM}
Associate Professor
University of North Dakota
Grand Forks, ND



SEC/TREAS/WEBMASTER

Jessica Fry, MLS(ASCP)SH
Assistant Teaching Professor
Bismarck State College
Bismarck, ND



NOMINATIONS CHAIR

Allison Waswick, MS, MLS(ASCP)^{CM}
Assistant Professor
University of North Dakota
Grand Forks, ND

Your 2025-2026 ASCLS-ND Board of Directors



ASCENDING PROFESSIONAL

Maisy Lindseth, MLS(ASCP)
Grand Forks, ND



DEVELOPING PROFESSIONAL

Maya Orvis (MLS student)
University of North Dakota
Grand Forks, ND



BOARD MEMBER AT LARGE

Becca Bakke, PhD, MLS(ASCP)^{CM}
Assistant Professor
University of North Dakota
Grand Forks, ND



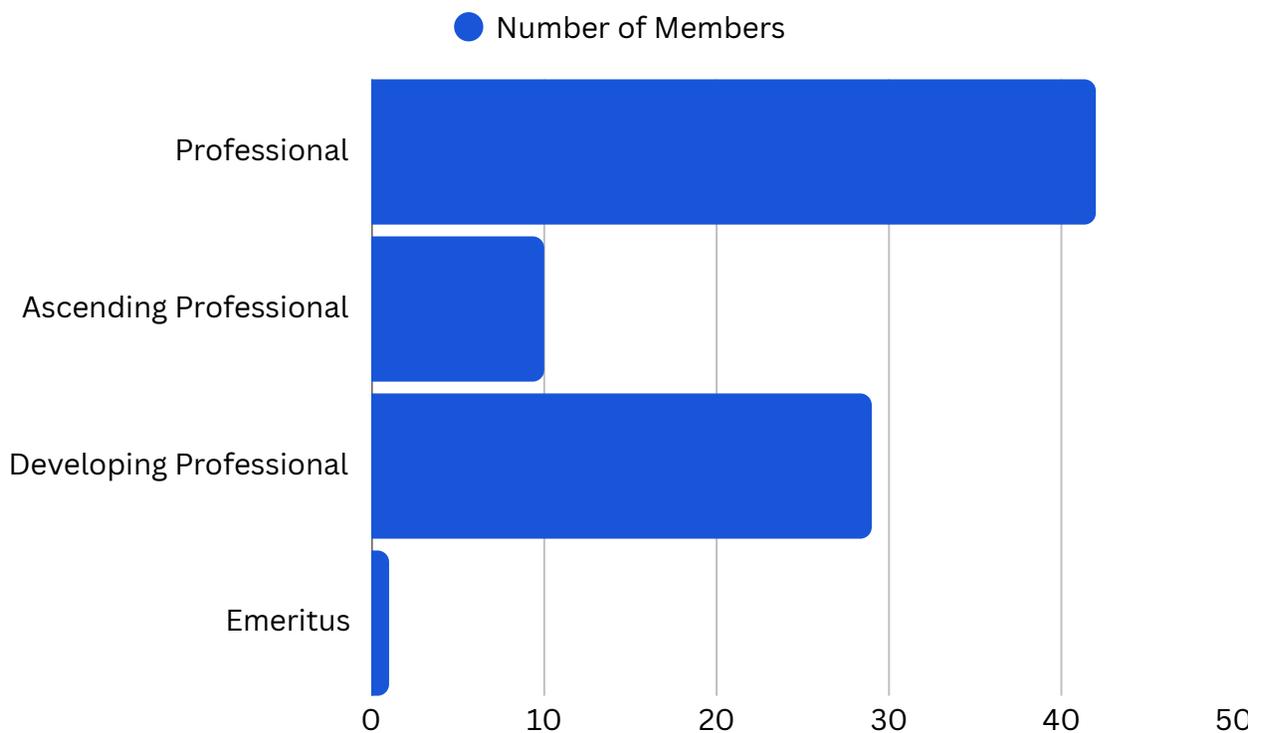
BOARD MEMBER AT LARGE

Heather Mayers, MS, MLS(ASCP)^{CM}
MLT Program Director
Lake Region State College
Grand Forks, ND



MEMBERSHIP STATISTICS

Who makes up our ASCLS-ND constituency? Currently, we have a total of **82 members**. Membership breakdown is shown in the graphic below.



(professional=42; ascending professional=10; developing professional=29; emeritus=1)

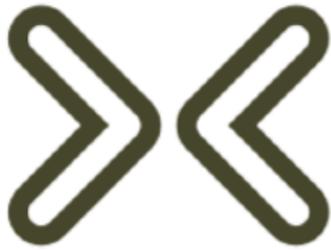


Not a member yet? Join us!

Sign up at [Join ASCLS. - ASCLS](#)



ASCLS-ND 2026 ANNUAL MEETING



Gather



Grow



Go

with **ASCLS-ND** in **FARGO**

The annual ASCLS-ND State Meeting will be held in Fargo, ND at the Holiday Inn on **Monday, April 20th and Tuesday, April 21st**. We are looking forward to "Gather, Grow and Go" - Gather as we all come together to support our profession, Grow as we learn new information and how to apply that to our profession and Go share this information with your fellow laboratorians.

What can you expect during this exciting event?

- **Great Speakers** - we will have 10 continuing education hours available to allow you to get that CE for both ND state licensure, as well as continuing maintenance
- **Great Vendors** - we will have a great vendor group that is already waiting to meet and talk with you while we all enjoy munchies and crunchies and maybe a drink or two
- **Great Networking** - what a great opportunity to interact with other attendees and get them on your "speed-dial" for when you have those questions and concerns and just making new like-minded friends
- **Great Door Prizes** - you know we always have some fun things to take home so try your luck and be sure to submit your name at registration as well as during the Vendor social

So...what are you waiting for?? Check out the details on the next page and get yourself registered!



ASCLS-ND 2026 ANNUAL MEETING

Schedule & Sessions

Monday, April 20th, 2026	
Time	Activity
11:00-12:20pm	ASCLS-ND Board Meeting (open to ASCLS-ND Board Members only)
12:30-1:20pm	S1 - Opening Keynote: Evolving Landscape of Alzheimer’s Disease Diagnostics
1:30-2:20pm	S2 - Bridging the Gap Between Healthcare IT and the Laboratory
2:30-3:20pm	S3 - From Bench to Beside: The Current Landscape of Immune Effector Cell (IEC) therapies in ND
3:20-3:45pm	SNACK & HOTEL CHECK-IN BREAK
3:45-4:35pm	S4 - Biosafety and Risk Assessments
4:45-5:35pm	S5 - Case Studies in Hematologic Malignancy Mutations
5:30-8:30pm	Vendor Social & Hors D’oeuvres
Tuesday, April 21st, 2026	
Time	Activity
7:30 - 8:50am	S6 - What are we Teaching the Kids these Days? & BREAKFAST
9:00-9:50am	S7 - Veterinary Tails: Illustrating the MLS Role in One Health
10:00-10:50am	S8 - Urothelial Carcinoma Screening Process During Routine Urinalysis
11:00-11:50am	S9 - “Oh, Schistocytes!! Now What?”
Noon-1:20pm	LUNCH & ASCLS-ND Business Meeting (all attendees encouraged to attend)
1:30-2:20pm	Session 10 - Closing Keynote: Closing the Divide: Pathways to Engage Underrepresented Communities in Blood Donation

Pricing

	Full Meeting (Both Mon & Tues)	Half Meeting (Mon or Tues only)	Student Admission
Price	\$155.00	\$85.00	\$25.00

Accommodations

Conference attendees can get a room at the Holiday Inn Fargo at a price of \$120.00 per night until **March 31st, 2026**. Reservations must be made by phone. Simply mention that you are part of the “American Society for Clinical Laboratory Science conference” to be eligible for the group price (subject to availability - we encourage you to make your reservations early).

Registration

Registration & payment can be completed online (with minimal service charge) through the ASCLS-ND website: [2026 ASCLS-ND Meeting](#) OR by mail using the registration form available online.



ASCLS-ND 2026/2027 NOMINATIONS

ASCLS-ND is seeking nominations for several positions. Nominate a deserving member, including yourself, for an opportunity to become more involved in ASCLS-ND! Please include the name of the person you are nominating and either their e-mail address, phone number, or place of employment. Submit nominations via e-mail to Allison Waswick (allison.waswick@UND.edu).

Nominations will be accepted until April 1st, 2026.

Open Positions Descriptions

President-elect: 1 year term (advance to President the following year)

- Becomes familiar with presidential duties to transition to the position the following year.
- Assists the President as needed and serves as CEO in absence of the President.
- Develops knowledge of past and present Society activities.
- Chairs ASCLS-ND membership development committee, and serves as liaison to LEND Advisory board.
- Co-chairs ASCLS-ND delegation at the annual meeting of the ASCLS House of Delegates.
- Prepares budget for the following year.
- Attends the Region V council meeting, business meetings, and ASCLS annual meeting.

Secretary/Treasurer: 2 year term

- **Responsibilities--Secretary**
Serves as Secretary at all meetings of the Board of Directors and all ASCLS-ND business meetings.
 - Board meetings are generally held in the fall and at the ASCLS-ND annual meeting; but may be convened at the President's discretion. A business meeting of the general membership is held at the annual meeting
- Records and permanently files minutes for all meetings.
 - Copies of minutes are forwarded to the President for approval.
 - Copies of approved minutes are forwarded to the newsletter editor(s) for publication.
- Submits names and addresses of all newly elected officers to ASCLS Executive Office immediately after election.

- Submits amended Bylaws to the ASCLS Executive Office and ASCLS Bylaws Committee Chair within ninety days of adoption of the amendment.
- Maintains a current list of active ASCLS-ND members.
 - The October list is used to assess Region V dues.
 - Lists are obtained from the ASCLS National Office via the ASCLS-ND President and/or Membership Development Committee Chair.
- Receives scholarship applications from CLS/CLT students by February 1 and submits the applications to the Education Committee Chair.
 - Applications are submitted to Education Committee with applicant identities concealed.
 - ASCLS-ND membership statuses of applicants are verified before applications are submitted to committee.
 - Reveals scholarship recipients' identities to the committee and provides checks for scholarship presentations at ASCLS-ND awards banquet.
- Maintains an adequate supply of ASCLS-ND stationery and envelopes and distributes to officers and committees as necessary.
- Purchases secretarial supplies as needed.

Responsibilities--Treasurer :

- Maintains and opens checking and savings accounts for ASCLS-ND as necessary.
- Assures receipt and expenditure of ASCLS-ND funds according to ASCLS-ND policies.
 - Makes deposits, pays approved bills, and maintains records of all receipts and expenditures. •Pays Region V dues to the Region V Director or Region V Treasurer by December 31 based on October membership list (\$1.75 per member).
- Submits accounts to President-selected audit committee one month prior to end of fiscal year.
- Prepares and presents Treasurer's Report to annual business meeting and at fiscal year end.
 - Report compares actual activities to those budgeted.
 - Board of Directors approves report prior to annual business meeting.
 - Year-end report is sent to newsletter editor(s) for publication.
- Becomes bonded if so directed by the Board of Directors.
- Assists the President-Elect in budget preparation for the following year.
- Attends Region V meeting.
- At end of term, closes the books after the members of the ND delegation have submitted ASCLS Annual Meeting expenses.
 - Changes the authorized signature on all checking and savings accounts to that of the new Treasurer.
 - Assists the new Treasurer in assuming responsibilities and duties

Nominations Committee Chair: 1 year term

- Serves as a member of the ASCLS-ND Board of Directors
- Solicits nominations for each available elective position via the newsletter or by email to the membership.
- Distributes online election to state society members at least 2 weeks prior to meeting.
- Prepares a display of the candidates' photographs and biographical information to be exhibited in the registration area prior to the business meeting.
- Conducts the election at the ASCLS-ND annual meeting.

Ascending Professional Delegate 1 year term (must be in the field for <5 years):

- Becomes familiar with issues presented to the House of Delegates (House of Delegates occurs at the National Meeting)
- Attends all meetings of the House of Delegates and other meetings as requested by the chair of the ND Delegation.
- Submits an article for publication in the winter issue of the ASCLS-ND newsletter.

Board Member at Large: 2 year term

- Serves as member of ASCLS-ND Board of Directors.
- Serves as committee chair and other leadership roles as requested by the President.



Considering running but are hesitant or unsure?

Contact ASCLS-ND President [Sam Peterson](#) to ask any and all questions!



CALLING ALL STUDENTS!

Each year, ASCLS-ND selects one student enrolled in an accredited medical laboratory science (MLS) or medical laboratory technician (MLT) program who possesses the qualities that best represents ASCLS and the MLS profession to be the **ASCLS-ND Developing Professional**. The duties and responsibilities of this prestigious position are described below. The position includes a 1 year term.

RESPONSIBILITIES:

- Serves as a member of the ASCLS-ND Board of Directors and attends board meetings.
- Attends the ASCLS-ND state meeting.
- Attends the annual ASCLS meeting and participates in all student activities.
- Serves as a representative and a member of the ASCLS-ND delegation at the annual meeting of the ASCLS House of Delegates.
- Attends the Issues Update and the Professional Issues Open Forum at the annual ASCLS meeting.
- Submits an article regarding their experiences at the annual ASCLS meeting for The Connection (the ASCLS-ND newsletter)
- Submits other articles for The Connection throughout the year, as requested
- Communicates with student members and non-members via e-mail, telephone, the ASCLS Connect Community, and/or the ASCLS-ND newsletter.
- Encourages & motivates student participation & membership in ASCLS-ND.
- Notifies students of the state ASCLS scholarship opportunity.
- Communicates needs, concerns, and opinions of the student members to the ASCLS-ND Board of Directors.

ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS:

- Enrollment in an accredited MLS or MLT program in North Dakota.
- Current student membership in ASCLS and ASCLS-ND
- All application materials must be received by **April 13th 2026**. Full application and directions available at asclsnd.org/student-info



SCHOLARSHIP OPPORTUNITY!

Are you a **student** in an accredited MLS or MLT program? Are you **passionate** about the laboratory field? Do you like **free money**? If so, KEEP READING!

Each year, ASCLS-ND selects students who are currently enrolled in an accredited MLS or MLT program to receive scholarship funds. Scholarships are typically \$500.

To apply for the state ASCLS scholarship, complete an application form and required materials (1-2 page essay, unofficial transcript, reference letter), and submit materials to the current ASCLS-ND Developing Professional, Maya Orvis, by **April 13th 2026**.

NOTE: The application and materials for the Developing Professional Position and the ASCLS-ND State Scholarship are the same. Feel free to submit the same materials for both opportunities!

The full application and directions can be found online at asclsnd.org/student-info. If you have any questions, please contact the current Developing Professional, Maya Orvis mayaorvis@gmail.com -->



Q&A

**with North Dakota's
First DCLS:**

Dr. Michelle Steiner



By: Samantha Peterson & Michelle Steiner

At just 40 years old, Dr. Michelle Steiner has achieved a remarkable milestone that no one else in North Dakota has - she graduated with a Doctor of Clinical Laboratory Science (DCLS) from the University of Texas Medical Branch (UTMB) in August 2025. An alumnus of the University of North Dakota (UND), where she earned her BS and MS degrees, Dr. Steiner boasts nearly 20 years of laboratory experience, including 13 years in supervisory roles. She is a certified histocompatibility technologist, holds two U.S. patents, and currently works as a consultant for Northern Plains Laboratory in Bismarck, ND. Additionally, she serves as the Chair of the Medical Laboratory Science (MLS) Committee for the Association of Diagnostic Laboratory Medicine (ADLM) and is actively involved with ASCLS-ND. Furthermore, her doctoral research titled “High Sensitivity Cardiac Troponin I and Clinical Outcomes of Major Acute Cardiac Events” has just been accepted for publication in The Journal of Applied Laboratory Medicine.

Dr. Steiner has generously taken the time to answer some questions about her DCLS journey. Read on to learn more!

Q: What is the DCLS degree and how does it differ from other graduate degrees?

A: The Doctor of Clinical Laboratory Science (DCLS) is an advanced professional doctorate tailored for certified medical laboratory scientists (MLS) aspiring to become advanced practitioners. Traditional laboratory positions emphasize test execution, while DCLS practitioners serve as clinical consultants, collaborating directly with healthcare teams to enhance patient outcomes through expert test selection and interpretation of results. A PhD primarily emphasizes research and the creation of new scientific knowledge. Conversely, a DCLS blends research with extensive clinical training and a residency component. DCLS students are required to complete a clinical residency, typically lasting one year, during which they engage in patient care rounds alongside physicians and pharmacists - an experience often lacking in PhD programs.

Q: What made you want to pursue the DCLS?

A: I have always been motivated to pursue continuous learning. The medical laboratory field has changed significantly since I graduate in 2007 with my BS degree. In 2010, I took a bold step and enrolled in the MS in MLS program at UND, where I enjoyed grasping material at a deeper level and applying it to my career. I still remember a 2014 presentation by Karen Peterson and Janna Schill for the MS cohort, which explored available career paths and announced Rutgers University's first doctoral program. Since then, I've followed the development of DCLS programs. When UTMB's DCLS program received NAACLS accreditation in December 2021, I knew I had to apply, inspired by the idea of connecting the laboratory top patient care and collaborating with medical providers to enhance outcomes.

Q: Where did you earn your degree and what was that experience like?

A: I was accepted to the UTMB DCLS program in Fall 2022. This program is a 75-credit advanced professional degree designed for practicing MLS professionals. Its purpose is to cultivate clinical experts who can offer guidance on test selection, monitor laboratory data to minimize diagnostic errors, and engage in translational research. The program is primarily online, with options for full-time or part-time study. It requires four consecutive weeks of on-campus clinical rotations at UTMB-Galveston. The curriculum focuses on advanced diagnostic reasoning, interprofessional collaboration, leadership in laboratory utilization, and evidence-based practice. As a full time employee, I was approved for a leave of absence to complete clinical rotations in Diagnostic Management Teams, Internal Medicine, Emergency Medicine, Family Medicine (inpatient & outpatient), and Acute Nephrology.

Q: What do you plan to do in the future with your DCLS degree?

A: After graduating last fall, I transitioned from the role of Core Laboratory Supervisor to a Clinical Consultant at Northern Plains Laboratory. In the months following graduation, I have concentrated on submitting my doctoral research manuscript for publication. I'm thrilled to share that it has been accepted by JALM. Furthermore, I have received approval to take the American Association of Bioanalysts High Complexity Clinical Laboratory Director certification exam, as well as the National Registry of Certified Chemists Clinical Chemist exam. Upon completing these certification exams, I plan to support our pathology group in offering clinical directorships to our clients with a particular focus on rural areas to ensure access to high-quality laboratory services. Additionally, I am passionate about translational research and am eager to continue conducting impactful research that highlights the significance of the medical laboratory science field in enhancing patient care. To facilitate this goal, I intend to complete the ADLM Data Science certificate program.

Q: What value do you see the DCLS adding to MLS and healthcare?

A: DCLS graduates hold diverse positions within the medical field, such as Medical/Associate Laboratory Director, Clinical Laboratory Consultant, Assistant/Associate Professor, Clinical Research Scientist, Quality Assurance/Regulatory Specialist, and Public Health Laboratory Scientist, among others.

I believe that DCLS graduates possess a unique perspective; they have a strong laboratory background while also experiencing both inpatient and outpatient care, making them valuable resources for front-line healthcare providers regarding laboratory test utilization and best practice guidelines.

Furthermore, DCLS graduates complement PhD graduates well, as they each excel in different specialties. PhD graduates typically concentrate on laboratory theory, mechanistic science, and basic research (for instance, studying a specific enzyme for years). In contrast, DCLS graduates evaluate the applicability of these theories in clinical settings and make necessary adjustments for practical implementation. While PhDs often prepare for careers in academia or intensive research, DCLS graduates are trained in translational research, which emphasizes applying evidence-based findings to enhance diagnostic processes and improve patient outcomes.

Q: Do you have any advice for others considering pursuing the DCLS?

A: I highly suggest exploring each of the four DCLS programs available in the USA, as they each provide distinct opportunities. These programs include Rutgers University, the University of Texas Medical Branch, the University of Kansas Medical Center, and the University of Cincinnati. Notably, UTMB's DCLS clinical rotations are organized into four separate rotations over a three-year full-time curriculum. At the time I applied, it was the only program that offered this structure, unlike the traditional year-long clinical rotation, which would not have suited my personal circumstances.

When contemplating an advanced career, it's important to reflect on how you plan to utilize your degree in the future. Are you looking to move into academia, administration, or stay within a clinical role? I personally wrestled with the decision between pursuing a PhD in Biomedical Sciences at UND and the DCLS program at UTMB. Ultimately, the DCLS program enabled me to maintain full-time employment without the need to relocate my family. It also allowed me to stay in a clinical environment, gain valuable experience from UTMB's academic medical staff, and develop skills in translational research that could positively impact patient outcomes. The DCLS program empowered me to transition from a 'behind-the-scenes' role in healthcare to actively participating on interdisciplinary working groups, and consulting with health care providers.

Interested in learning more about the DCLS? Read ASCLS's position paper on the DCLS: [🌐 Advanced Practice: Doctorate in Clinical Laboratory Science - ASCLS](#)

Or visit the webpages of the four current DCLS programs in the U.S.:

- Rutgers University: [🌐 Doctor of Clinical Laboratory Science](#)
- University of Cincinnati: [🌐 Online Doctorate of Clinical Lab Science](#)
- University of Kansas: [🌐 Doctorate Degree in Clinical Laboratory Science](#)
- University of Texas Medical Branch: [🌐 Doctorate of Clinical Laboratory Sciences - SHP Clinical Laboratory Scie...](#)



CLEC 2026 Recap

The Clinical Laboratory Educator's Conference (CLEC) was held early February in Bellevue, WA. Several ASCLS-ND and Region V members were present in attendance and participated in presenting posters & educational sessions!

University of North Dakota faculty presented a session on their use of simulation technology in MLS education.



Left to right: Shannon Jongeward, Heather Langerud, Karen Peterson, Sam Peterson





CLEC 2026 Recap

Additionally, ASCLS-SD and ASCLS-WI educators presented educational and poster sessions.



Above, left to right: SDSU educators Kassi Erickson, April Nelson, & Heather Moser speaking about Digital Microscopy. Heather also presented a poster about choice-based leadership assignments.

You may also recognize Leah Narans La Fleur of ASCLS-WI (below, left) who presented a session about preparing lab professionals for teaching roles. Or maybe you recognize Patricia Tille of ASCLS-SD (below, right) who presented a session about designing effective online courses.





Upcoming ASCLS Events

Save the dates!

ASCLS- ND State Meeting

- April 20 & 21, 2026
- Fargo, ND - Holiday Inn
- registration available at asclsnd.org



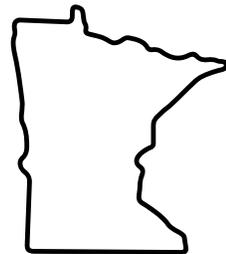
Joint Annual Meeting (JAM)

- June 28-July 2, 2026
- St Louis, Missouri
- more info at ascls.org/jam-registration



ASCLS Region V Symposium

- October 8 & 9, 2026
- Bloomington, MN
- Crowne Plaza Suites
- more information to come!





The Waiting Game

A quick game to play while your samples incubate!

(Answer key can be found on the next page)

In the Blood Bank

P P S D C M G E T U H K U C W D V L S F
 F H O I F O Y L P S U K G R S K D H Z D
 B O S T H S O A S Q K T I Y V X E I R U
 F I G K E A M M C R V X G O V S J Y W F
 C I I I L N N B B E E E Z P L I P C X F
 Z P Q D O E T T E S N B U R V D L G S Y
 I I C D Z F W I I X U T W E G V A T Z R
 L D H O V A W I A G X V R C A C S R F E
 Q R E X M C G H S T E P U I I U M A G C
 L E L N U P R G D X O N K P F X A L A I
 A X A H T A A O L O V R E I P U N I Q P
 N L R W E I N T S U N U L T M V G B G I
 T B R T K M F T I S T O L A T H P E F E
 I I L A U T O I I B M I R T B G W P U N
 B R O C G J C L C S I A N E N K E S Z T
 O N Q O I P D A Y A E L T A V H P F H J
 D W I F W U S M M S T R I C T N S F G H
 Y E L U T I O N J K I I A T H I N A I T
 F U A R U C R L L U M S O I Y B O I T B
 T R A N S F U S I O N D G N B E C N K K

cryoprecipitate	identification	agglutination	Kidd
potentiator	transfusion	crossmatch	Kell
compatibility	centrifuge	hemolysis	
antisera	antibody	antigen	
plasma	elution	Coombs	
recipient	donor	Duffy	
Lewis	TRALI	TACO	



The Waiting Game

ANSWER KEY!



cryoprecipitate	identification	agglutination	Kidd
potentiator	transfusion	crossmatch	Kell
compatibility	centrifuge	hemolysis	
antisera	antibody	antigen	
plasma	elution	Coombs	
recipient	donor	Duffy	
Lewis	TRALI	TACO	

More From ASCLS-ND

Website

asclsnd.org

Social Media

facebook.com/ASCLSND

Contact

asclsnd@gmail.com



ASCLS

The American Society for
Clinical Laboratory Science