

THE CONNECTION

FALL ISSUE

November 18, 2025

President's Message



By: Samantha
Peterson

Happy Fall y'all! As we ease into the cooler months, action in ASCLS-ND is just starting to heat up. Members in our state society, along with others throughout Region V (ND, SD, MN, WI) have been hard at work in the name of MLS. As such, you'll notice that this issue of *The Connection* emphasizes **advocacy** and **outreach**.

In early October, I traveled to Sioux Falls, SD for the Region V Symposium. Amongst many great talks was one that stood out to me. Damien Garza (government affairs chair; ASCLS-Wisconsin) talked about his experience with laboratory advocacy. He spoke of the importance of educating others about our profession and its critical nature. Something Damien said really stuck with me, and I want to share it with you all, as I'll be using it when I advocate for MLS. He said, as medical laboratory professionals, "**we turn samples into answers**". I found this to be such a succinct yet impactful message to not only explain what we do as MLS, but to illustrate our importance and impact on patient care.

Later in October, President-elect, Dr. Shannon Jongeward and Ascending Professional, Maisy Lindseth, traveled to Alexandria, VA to attend the Labovcate Symposium (formerly Legislative Days).

Both Dr. Jongeward and Maisy wrote great articles about their experiences at Labovcate and the issues discussed for The Connection, so be sure to check those out. I encourage, if not urge, all of our members to consider becoming more involved in laboratory advocacy. To get started, be sure to check out the [Labovcate Webpage](#) which includes updates on laboratory-related legislation and resources to help you advocate. You can even become a [Labovcate Ambassador](#)!

In addition to legislative advocacy, our members have been busy advocating for our profession in the form of outreach and education. ASCLS-ND Developing Professional, Maya Orvis, has been spending her (very rare) spare time reaching out to high schools around North Dakota to talk to students about pursuing a career laboratory medicine.

Additionally, ASCLS-ND member Dr. Michelle Steiner, along with fellow ASCLS Region V members, recently attended the National Science Teachers Association conference to speak with high school science teachers about Medical Laboratory Science as a career option for students. Learn more about all of these happenings in this issue of the connection.

Happy reading,
~Sam

Your 2025-2026 ASCLS-ND Board of Directors



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Grand Forks, ND



DEVELOPING PROFESSIONAL

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Grand Forks, ND



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Behind the Scenes

By: Dr. Shannon Jongeward - ASCLS-ND President-elect

Behind the scenes. How many times have we said this about ourselves and our profession – we are the healthcare professionals working “behind the scenes”. Well, that is also exactly what ASCLS does for the profession, too – advocates for not only members of ASCLS, but the profession as a whole... “behind the scenes”. Laboratory professionals, even ASCLS members, may or may not realize everything that the organization does for the profession.

One of the many ways ASCLS does this is by partnering with other professional organizations, such as ASCP and AMT, to organize as a united front once a year and connect with our state’s congressional leaders at the annual Labvocate Symposium in Washington D.C. This year, Labvocate was held on October 20-21, 2025, and I had the privilege of attending.

The format is generally the same as in previous years, where the first day is spent as a group preparing for the congressional visits. The issues are reviewed, the process of how congressional offices work is discussed, and how to communicate your message effectively is covered. The second day is spent meeting with state leaders to discuss the issues facing the medical laboratory profession.

There were two main issues discussed this year:

- The Reforming and Enhancing Sustainable Updates to Laboratory Testing Services (RESULTS) Act of 2025 (H.R.5269/S.2761)
- The Medical Laboratory Personnel Shortage Relief Act of 2024 (H.R.5444).

The RESULTS act seeks to reform the Protecting Access to Medicare Act (PAMA) by improving the data used to set rates on the Clinical Laboratory Fee Schedule (CLFS). Beginning January 1, 2026, approximately 820 routine laboratory test rates are scheduled to be cut by up to 15 percent, with further reductions planned for 2027 and 2028. These cuts severely threaten patient access to routine and life-saving diagnostics, particularly in rural states like North Dakota.

The Medical Laboratory Personnel Shortage Relief Act would establish a grand program to expand capacity for MLS and MLT programs, including the recruitment of faculty, and would also add the medical laboratory profession to the National Health Service Corps list for loan repayment eligibility.

These are two significant issues affecting the laboratory currently. These are exactly the reasons why membership in a professional organization like ASCLS is imperative, to make our voices heard, to be on the main stage for once, and not behind the scenes.



Labvocate Experience

By: Maisy Lindseth -
ASCLS-ND Ascending
Professional

In addition to JAM earlier this year, I had the opportunity to attend and experience another ASCLS Conference! This one was at another dream location - Washington D.C - with plenty of learning and sight-seeing sprinkled in. I also enjoyed the chance to reconnect with some of the other Ascending and Developing Professionals I met at JAM.

We were lucky enough to spend our first day in D.C. touring the area. I loved being able to walk around the city all day and see

all of the famous monuments. Shannon and I even used the public transportation system to get to some of the monuments, museums, and our Capitol Hill meetings. This made me feel more immersed in the traveling experience.

I found the meetings on the first day of the Labvocate Symposium very educational. It really taught me things I was unfamiliar with regarding written laws and healthcare. After learning about the RESULTS Act and Medical Laboratory Personnel Shortage Relief Act, I hope to continue to advocate for the Acts and what they stood for.

“I’m so elated that I could experience Capitol Hill and Washington D.C. while representing ND and the lab profession.”

North Dakota being a state with many rural healthcare locations, The RESULTS Act would be very important to pass so that routine laboratory testing can still be provided and reimbursed to the performing laboratories. The Medical Laboratory Personnel Shortage Relief Act would also have the potential to help with staffing shortages across North Dakota and the nation.

The grant program being established for lab personnel can help with recruitment and retention of staff. Students will have the opportunity to work and pay off any student debt faster with the program.

The meetings on Capitol Hill during the final day of the conference were another amazing experience. I was in awe of how many buildings there were on The Hill and how busy they were. It was great to get our message across to the senators and representative of North Dakota. I felt very professional being able to advocate on behalf of ASCLS-ND and the laboratory personnel I represented.

Everyone was very kind and took the time and listen to what we were advocating for, which I really appreciated. Shannon and I are currently working to follow up with those we met with and waiting to see where the Acts may go in the House and the Senate. I’m so elated that I could experience what Capitol Hill and Washington D.C. have to offer, while representing North Dakota and the laboratory profession.





Snapshots from Labvocate 2025



Maisy (left) and Dr. Jongeward (right) ready to travel to The Hill and lobby to our ND senators & representative



Maisy waiting in the lobby of Senator Kevin Cramer. (Luckily she didn't have to wait as long as her friend sitting next to her!)



Maisy in front of the Lincoln Memorial



Proud North Dakotans representing our great state

Building Awareness: Inspiring the Next Generation of Laboratory Professionals in Rural North Dakota

By: Maya Orvis - ASCLS-ND Developing Professional



Laboratory professionals are the hidden backbone of healthcare. Yet, across the United States—and especially in rural areas like North Dakota—laboratories are struggling to find qualified staff. This well documented shortage of laboratory professionals has continued to put a strain on individuals, clinics, and hospital systems. In the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, coupled with an aging population, and advancements in technology, the variety and volume of testing have continued to rise. Meeting these growing demands requires more laboratory scientists and technicians to fill numerous vacant positions nationwide. While there are many challenges with this staffing gap, my goal is to address the issue of visibility and to encourage younger students to consider a career in laboratory medicine.

While this shortage is a national concern, the problem is especially pronounced in rural states like North Dakota. ND is a largely rural state, adding even more challenges to filling laboratory positions.

Having grown up in a rural area myself, I have found it is much easier to attract and retain rural professionals when they have grown up and are familiar with this way of life. This perspective guided my outreach, focusing on the smaller, rural communities that don't have the same opportunities and exposure to healthcare, such as Scrubs camp, as those in more urban areas.

I reached out to twelve schools from across the state. Although I did not hear back from every school, I was able to connect virtually with several. In these sessions, I either shared a recorded video presentation with handouts and resources, or I joined a live Zoom call to present in real time. The recorded video presentation has been distributed to three schools, reaching about 100 students, and I also had the opportunity to meet with Burke Central High School via Zoom.

My presentation was brief and covered several key topics: what laboratory science is, the four main areas of the lab, career outlook, a day in the life of an MLS student, and time for questions. My goal was to briefly discuss all parts of lab medicine and spark interest students who may not have considered a career in healthcare, particularly those who are more introverted and enjoy working independently.

I am pleased with how my materials turned out; they are accurate, informative, and engaging for most students. In the future, I would suggest expanding outreach to an even greater number of schools. There are many high schools and students I did not reach who could benefit from learning about our profession. For others who take on similar outreach, I recommend presenting in person. While my schedule didn't allow for it this time, I believe there is significant value in face-to-face interaction and the opportunity for hands-on activities.

As the ASCLS-ND developing professional, I feel a strong responsibility to help grow our profession and give students the opportunity to learn about the immense impact we have on patient care, and I think the work we do is pretty fun, too! By continuing to share our enthusiasm for laboratory science, we can help bridge the visibility gap and inspire the next generation of professionals. After all, our work is not only vital to patient care—it's also deeply rewarding.

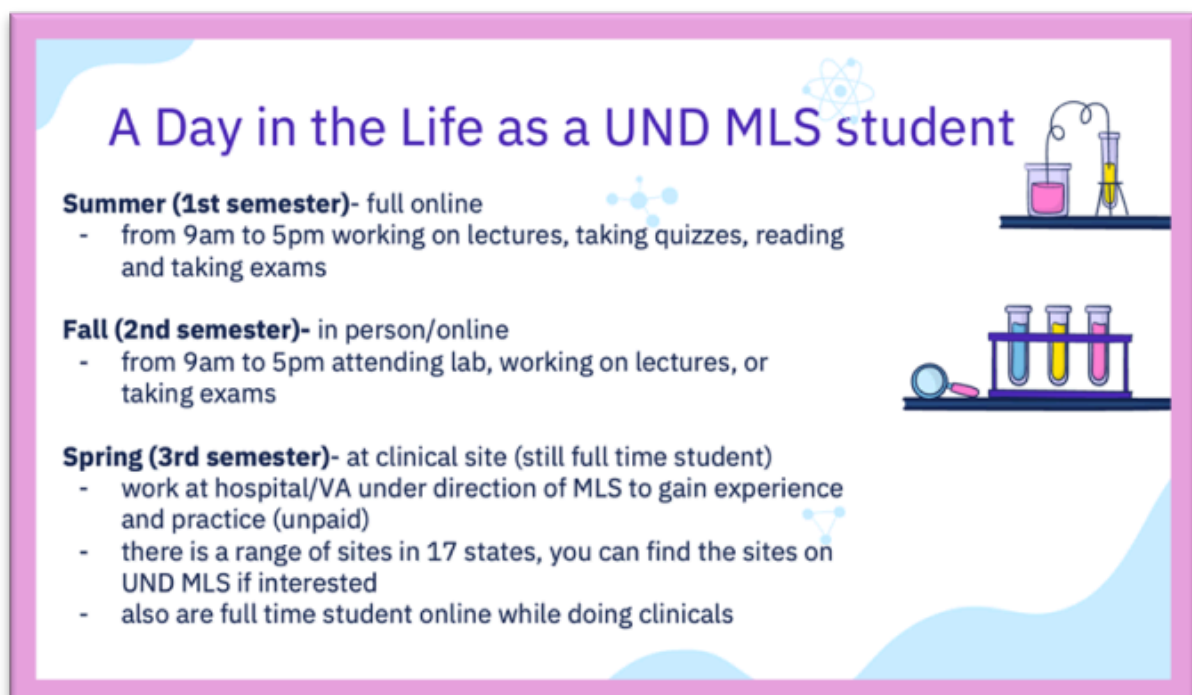
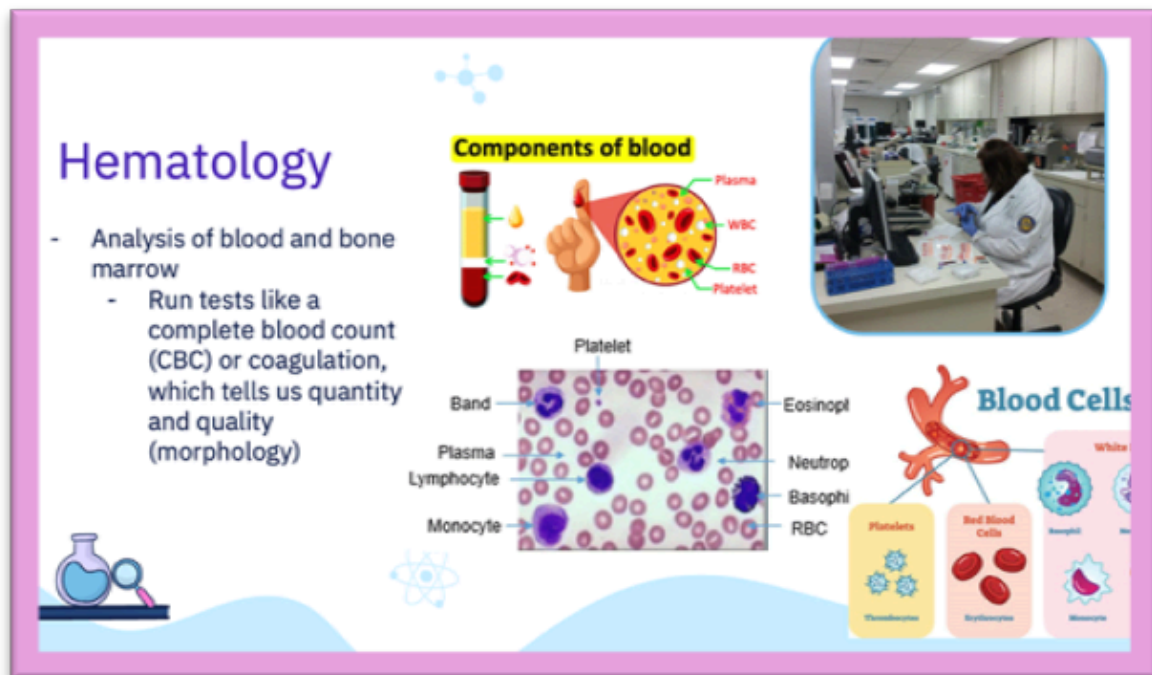


Building Awareness: Inspiring the Next Generation of Laboratory Professionals in Rural North Dakota

By: Maya Orvis - ASCLS-ND Developing Professional

If you or anyone you know is interested in distributing information to students about laboratory science, please reach out to me, as I am more than happy to provide you the materials! (maya.orvis@gmail.com). You can find a sampling of my materials below.

-Maya





Region V MLS Outreach

The National Science Teachers Association

ASCLS Region V recently banded together to help fund an ASCLS booth at the National Science Teachers Association (NSTA) National Conference in Minneapolis, MN that took place on Nov 12-15, 2025. Dr. Michelle Steiner (pictured on the right) represented ASCLS-ND at the booth.

At the NSTA conference, our ASCLS representatives spent multiple days speaking with science teachers from around the country about careers in the medical laboratory. They had over **500 meaningful conversations** with teachers about certification and accredited programs to get students interest into MLS career. Many teachers were interested in contacting an MLS for lab tours, guest speakers, and job shadowing opportunities. This illustrates the fact that people are interested in what we do - we just need to educate them about it.

This work is a great example of finding unique opportunities to share what we do and how others can join the field of medical laboratory science. Thank you to all those involved!





Upcoming ASCLS Events

Save the dates!

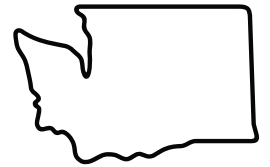
ASCLS- ND State Meeting

- April, 2026 (exact dates TBD)
- Fargo, ND
- more info will be available at asclsnd.org



Clinical Laboratory Educator's Conference (CLEC)

- February 5-7, 2026
- Bellevue, WA
- more info at ascls.org/clec



Joint Annual Meeting (JAM)

- June 28-July 22, 2026
- St Louis, Missouri
- more info at ascls.org/jam-registration





The Waiting Game

A quick game to play while your samples incubate!

(Answer key can be found on the next page)

In the Chemistry Lab!

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

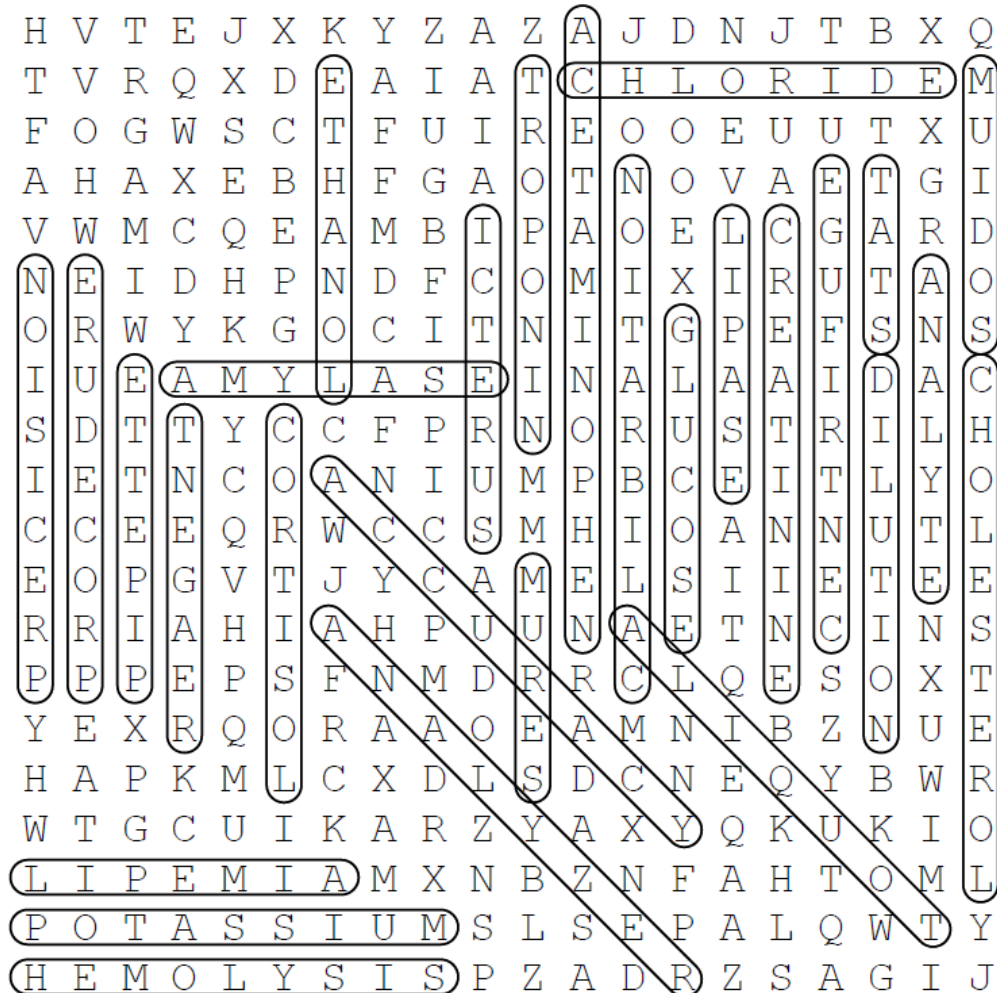
1. accuracy 2. acetaminophen 3. aliquot 4. amylase 5. analyte 6. analyzer
7. calibration 8. centrifuge 9. chloride 10. cholesterol 11. cortisol 12. creatinine
13. dilution 14. ethanol 15. glucose 16. hemolysis 17. icterus 18. lipase
19. lipemia 20. pipette 21. potassium 22. precision 23. procedure 24. reagent
25. serum 26. sodium 27. STAT 28. troponin



The Waiting Game

ANSWER KEY!

In the Chemistry Lab!



1. accuracy 2. acetaminophen 3. aliquot 4. amylase 5. analyte 6. analyzer
7. calibration 8. centrifuge 9. chloride 10. cholesterol 11. cortisol 12. creatinine
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Clinical Laboratory Science