



April 16, 2019

Dear Chairman and Members of the House Committee on Education:

I am the current President of ASCLS-Oregon (American Society of Clinical Laboratory Scientists). I represent the current, past and future medical laboratory professionals, the ones who perform lab testing of various complexities for you and your constituents.

We have an ongoing crisis in our profession because so many of our working members are reaching retirement age and will be leaving the work force. A large number have already left to pursue careers in allied fields or education, including myself and my fellow instructors. I teach for Clackamas Community College for the Clinical Laboratory Assistant (CLA) program, and no longer actively work in the field. Who will replace us? Also, who will be responsible for performing the new testing created by research, such as Molecular testing like CRISPR? We are already stretched by some of us being trained in the newer technologies and those who remain to do routine medical testing in clinics and hospitals.

The answer is the students graduating from high school wanting to work in a medical discipline governed by the idea of serving others in healthcare and practicing science every day. They are the work force we need in place to continue our work. But the training of our future laboratory professionals is very expensive and labor intensive. We have to work side by side with these students to teach them the skills that will answer the questions the physicians need answered about their patients. Our students must gain familiarity with a variety of diagnostic instruments and develop the necessary hand skills to perform accurate testing.

Properly trained laboratory personnel provide diagnostic information, and help monitor treatment. We provide quality care through well-trained students. This cannot happen with insufficient funds for equipment, instructors and supplies. An insufficient amount of funding cuts into the quality of our programs, the number of students we can take, and fewer workers entering the work force to continue what services we provide to our communities.

Community Colleges such as mine take incoming HS graduates and GED students and steer them into rewarding and productive careers with room for growth and fulfillment. They gain exposure to a variety of healthcare careers and career ladders. We provide the door. Don't close it on us. Thank you for the time you have spent reading what I have said. I hope that I have stated my case for continued and sufficient funding for laboratory profession programs, such as the CLA program at CCC, the Medical Laboratory Technician (MLT) program at Portland Community College, and the Medical Laboratory Scientist (MLS) program at Oregon Tech.

Sincerely,

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