

MOUNTAIN WEST PATHOLOGY



Don Schultz MD * Allen Brent Mendez MD

PO Box 4846, Helena MT 59604

Pathology Office Phone: 406-447-2427 Pathology Office FAX: 406-444-2126

Business Office Phone: 406-502-1541 Business Office FAX: 406-502-1542

Dear Pat Murdo

It has come to my attention that there will be a discussion on if there is a need for Clinical Laboratory Licensure. I have been intimately involved with the medical laboratory profession for over 20 years and have worked closely with many Clinical Laboratory Scientists as well as non-licensed laboratory technicians and assistants in three different states. With that said, I can safely say that I do have experience and expertise with the abilities of laboratory technicians and the need to maintain a formal licensure process.

Laboratory professionals must provide accurate, specific and reliable information using state-of-the-art technology to facilitate evidence-based patient care decisions. The laboratory information, they provide, has a direct impact on patient diagnosis, treatment, health maintenance, safety, length of stay, as well as resource utilization, and patient satisfaction. The work laboratory professionals perform does not simply involve placing a patient sample on an instrument; they must use their medical knowledge to determine if the laboratory results are accurate or valid. For example, we have had several cases where our laboratory professionals noticed that certain patient laboratory results did not appear correct and determined that the patient samples were diluted. On further investigation they identified that blood samples drawn from a certain type of PIC line was the culprit; which in turn resulted in the hospital changing the type of PIC line they used in the hospital. The knowledge and expertise of these laboratory professionals helped prevent patients from getting unnecessary and potentially harmful treatments they did not need as a result of inaccurate laboratory test results. I have strong beliefs that if highly qualified and trained laboratory professionals were not involved, this could have resulted in serious patient safety issues.

Thus, laboratory personnel licensure is essential to protect the public from substandard laboratory services and possibly misleading information, by assuring that only adequately educated and qualified individuals perform testing. By maintaining CLS licensure standards we can help ensure that the public is protected from substandard care and consequences of inaccurate results. CLS licensure will set standards that must be followed to assure quality and consistent laboratory testing; define and protect the scope of practice of the profession; facilitate an effective response in disaster preparedness by assisting in the identification, locating and mobilization of needed clinical laboratory professionals; and improve access to accurate laboratory workforce data. Personnel licensure defines and protects the clinical laboratory scope of practice and consequently will prevent individuals lacking the required education from assuming laboratory practice. Furthermore, the complexity of new test requirements, especially for genetic and molecular testing, is increasing and requires a much higher degree of standards to ensure patient and public health safety. In the end, delivering the safest and highest quality of patient care is our primary objective.

Thank you for hearing and considering my opinion when making your decision.

Sincerely,

Don Schultz MD