

# 2024 Workforce Action Alliance Summit

*Proceedings Document*



**May 7, 2024**

Destin - Fort Walton Beach Convention Center  
Fort Walton Beach, Florida

# Workforce Action Alliance Summit 2024

## Proceedings Document



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*“Laboratory testing is instrumental in our system of care providing physicians with actionable data to diagnose and treat patients. Unfortunately, the current shortage in the clinical laboratory workforce has reached a breaking point. It will take everyone working together to reverse the current trajectory.”*

*– Kathy Nucifora, MPH, MLS(ASCP), Chief Operating Officer, COLA*



# Letter of Appreciation

On May 7, 2024, stakeholders from the laboratory industry gathered in Fort Walton Beach, Florida, for the second annual Workforce Action Alliance's Summit. The Summit's main purpose was to inspire a community of action to address numerous aspects of the laboratory workforce shortage.

Working together to accomplish small but impactful actions to address the workforce shortage, the dedicated professionals who have joined the alliance reported on the progress of the initiatives that resulted from the inaugural Summit in 2023. We are grateful to all those who have taken time from their busy lives to contribute to this worthy cause, and it was inspiring to hear about the amazing work that has been done to date.

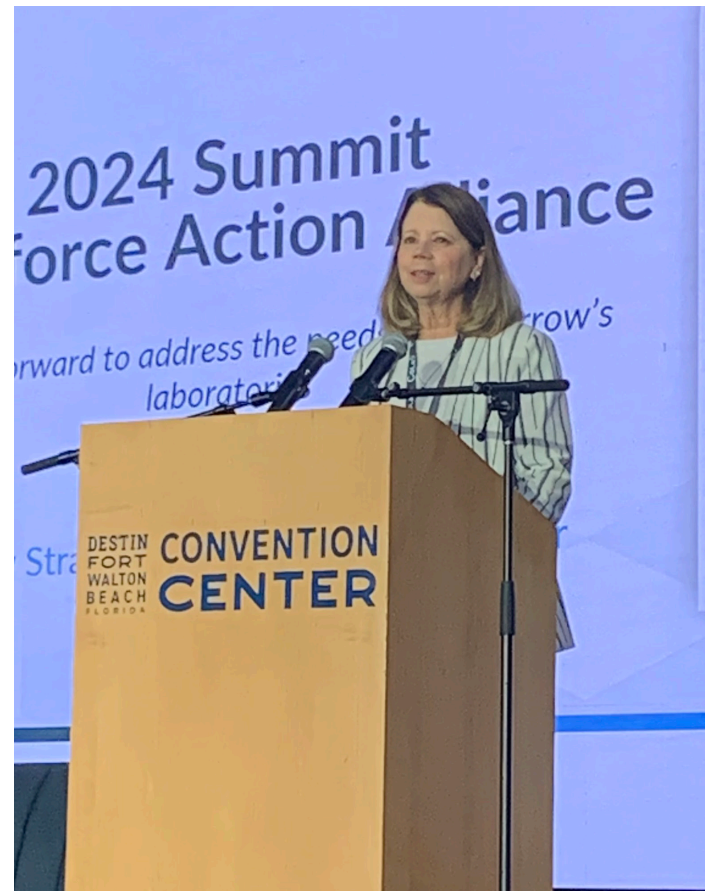
We believe it is crucial to educate the next generation about this vital profession, as well as the fascinating scientific and technological advancements and cutting-edge career options available to future laboratory scientists. This proceedings document is a summary of the 2024 Workforce Action Alliance Summit. Anyone may freely share these proceedings with others.

It was an honor to participate among the leaders present at the Summit, and we appreciate the efforts of the 2024 Summit Planning Committee members and the charitable donations from AAB and COLA, which made the Summit possible. We made progress, but we still have a long way

to go. Our hope is that our collaborative efforts will be a catalyst toward ensuring a sufficient and competent laboratory science workforce.

Sincerely,

**Nancy Stratton, Chief Executive Officer of COLA**  
**Kathy Nucifora, MPH, MLS (ASCP), Chief Operating Officer of COLA**



Nancy Stratton

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# Summit Introduction

The idea to hold a Workforce Action Alliance Summit was sparked at COLA's 2022 Laboratory Enrichment Forum during an educational panel discussion about the challenges of the laboratory workforce shortage. Understanding that so many others were working on this issue, COLA invited a number of executive leaders from laboratory organizations to assist us in organizing and hosting the Summit. We were delighted that all our invitations to participate were accepted, which led to the formation of the 2023 WAA Summit Planning Committee. The 2023 Summit in Fort Worth, Texas kicked off what we hope will be a continuing annual event, while members of the alliance work on three selected initiatives throughout each year. The organizations that were represented on the 2023 Planning Committee again joined the Planning Committee for the 2024 Summit, and we are very grateful for their continued commitment.

There are already a number of excellent initiatives under way to address the laboratory workforce crisis. The goal of the WAA is to work in concert with other organizations, and to share information and ideas with others, and to be inclusive of the needs of both clinical and public health laboratories.

The Planning Committee also proposed the following guidelines to govern the time spent at the one-day annual Summits:

- Encourage everyone's contribution
- Focus on what matters
- Listen together for patterns and insights
- Build on each other's ideas

During each annual Summit, the progress on the initiatives selected during the previous year will be summarized, and no more than three initiatives will be selected for the next year. Some initiatives are so comprehensive or complex that they may need to be continued from year to year.

Initiatives selected at the inaugural Summit in 2023 were:

1. Strengthen data to better understand the laboratory workforce
2. Communicate career pathways in laboratory science for new and transitioning professionals
3. Standardize professional titles

During the 2024 Summit, it was agreed that the first two initiatives, strengthening the data and communicating career pathways, would continue into the second year. The professional titles workgroup concluded and at the 2024 Summit the following initiatives were agreed upon:

1. Strengthen data to understanding the laboratory workforce
2. Communicate career pathways in laboratory science for new and transitioning professionals
3. Identify the future skills and rewards required for laboratory scientists

This report will describe the accomplishments from the first year, as well as the action plans for the second year.



# 2024 Planning Committee Members

**Kathy Nucifora, MPH, MLS (ASCP)** Chief Operating Officer of COLA, Chair of the Committee

**Christine Bean, Ph.D., MBA, MLS (ASCP)**, Chief Learning Officer, Association of Public Health Laboratories

**Mark Birenbaum, PhD.**, Administrator, American Association of Bioanalysts and the National Independent Laboratory Association

**Jim Flanigan, CAE, EVP**, American Society for Clinical Laboratory Science

**Edna Garcia, MPH**, Senior Director, Scientific Engagement & Research, American Society for Clinical Pathology

**Iman Kundu, MPH**, Senior Manager, Research and Analytics, American Society for Clinical Pathology

**Amy L. Leber, PhD., D (ABMM)**, Director, Clinical Microbiology and Immunoserology Nationwide Children's Hospital, American Society for Microbiology

**Michelle Bell**, Clinical Pathology Support Manager, Clinical Pathology Associates, Buda, TX, representing the National Society for Histotechnology

**Kelly Winter, PhD.** Chief of Training & Workforce Development Branch, Centers for Disease Control

**Melanie Sloan, MS MLS (ASCP) SBB**, Association for the Advancement of Blood and Biotherapies

*"We are grateful to the hard work and commitment demonstrated by each of the 2024 Planning Committee members."*

*Kathy Nucifora, MPH, MLS(ASCP)*



# State of the Laboratory Workforce

During the inaugural Summit in 2023, a comprehensive state of the laboratory workforce was presented, and a summary of important data and contributing factors are detailed in the 2023 Proceedings Document, which can be found [here](#).

## Review of Accomplishments

At the 2024 Summit, the leaders of each of the initiatives submitted written reports and presented a brief summary of their accomplishments during the past year. Below are summaries of the reports.

### 1. Strengthen data to understanding the laboratory workforce

The presentation from this initiative workgroup consisted of three informative slide decks:

a. Jim Flanigan, ASCLS, summarized the current state of the workforce, with data from the US Bureau of Labor Statistics as well as from the 2021-22 ASCP laboratory vacancy survey.

- The U.S. Department of Labor estimates 320,000 bachelors and associates degreed laboratory professionals are working in the United States.
- If each of those professionals worked a standard 40-year career, the natural annual attrition of 2.5% would require 8,000 new professionals to maintain their current numbers.
- Numbers of non-retirement losses are not well documented.
- In addition to replacing the retiring and exiting laboratory workforce, it is estimated that there will be a demand for approximately 2,800 new laboratory workers, totaling an annual need of at least 10,800.
- There are currently approximately 6,900 MLS and MLT graduates each year. It is not known how many non-certified personnel with science degrees, or immigrating laboratory workers are available to the laboratory workforce.

## Inflow Capacity and Efficiency

Graduates and New Certifications 2018-2022 (NAACLS, ASCP BOC, and AMT)						
	Graduates		Certifications		Conversion Rate	
	MLS	MLT	MLS*	MLT	MLS	MLT
2018	3,772	3,160	4,051	2,707	107.40%	85.66%
2019	3,899	2,932	3,737	2,619	95.85%	89.32%
2020	3,964	2,848	3,502	2,331	88.35%	81.85%
2021	4,114	2,844	3,690	2,275	89.69%	79.99%
2022	4,246	2,622	3,813	2,140	89.80%	81.62%
<b>Total</b>	<b>19,995</b>	<b>14,406</b>	<b>18,793*</b>	<b>12,072</b>	<b>93.99%</b>	<b>83.80%</b>
<b>Per Annum</b>	<b>3,999</b>	<b>2,881</b>	<b>3,759</b>	<b>2,414</b>		

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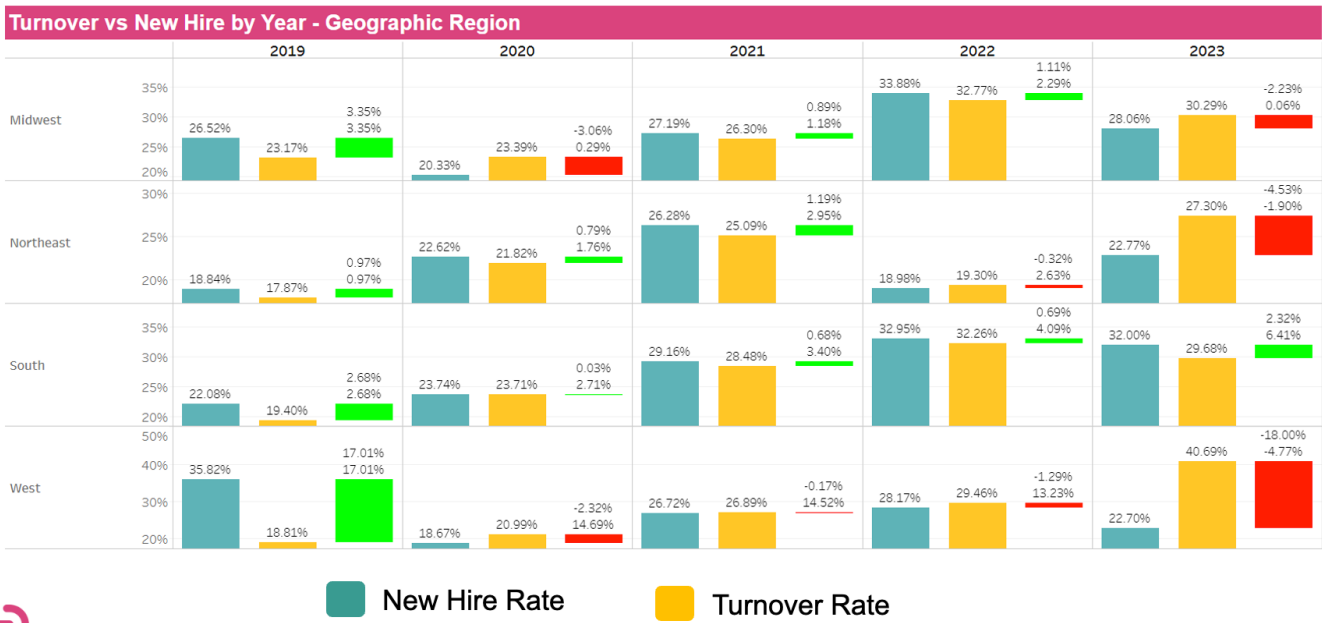
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b. Doug Miller, Premier Inc., presented a wide variety of data that is collected annually from hospitals across the country. This included data on turnover, salary/expenses, overtime, temporary worker utilization and percentage of tests outsourced to reference laboratories.

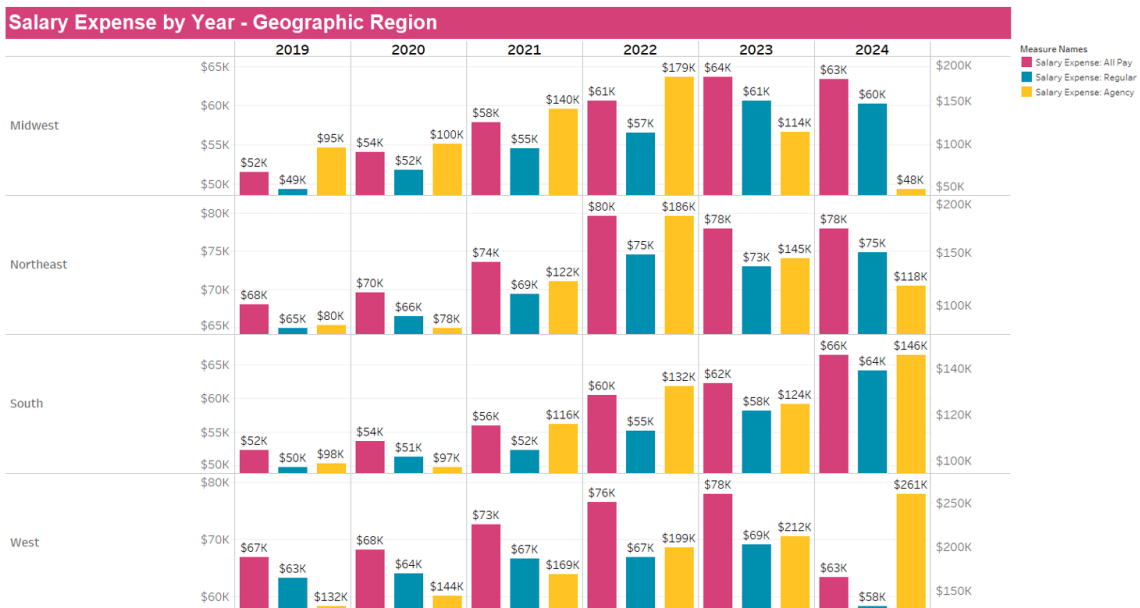
The graphs below demonstrates the increase in staff turnover and salary expenses for agency staff, respectively, in the years leading up to and including the pandemic. questions, based upon the need for data identified by members of the WAA:

### New Hire and Turnover Trend By Region



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### Salary Expense By Region



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c. Marisa James, NCCLS, presented data from the 2023 NAACLS survey of more than 600 laboratory science programs. Following is a summary of some of the significant information presented.

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, the laboratory workforce was facing a critical shortage of professionals due to an insufficient number of qualified laboratory personnel and the limited number of laboratory educational programs. The COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated the issue with the massive increase in laboratory testing volumes and reduced labor force.

In response, some laboratory employers have developed their own “training programs” to avoid attending an accredited program. In many instances, these individuals do not qualify for certification either.

There is not enough data to explain why there is a laboratory labor shortage. There are many possible

contributing factors, including lack of clinical affiliates and low pay.

The data gleaned from the NAACLS Annual Survey should have the potential to secure resources for the laboratory science field. For instance, other areas in healthcare (i.e., Nursing) have obtained financial assistance from the government simply by providing statistics to prove a workforce shortage, faculty or preceptor shortage, or other resource gap exists.

Additionally, programs may be able to compare their resources to others and determine their internal benchmarks for faculty workload, student: instructor ratios, etc.

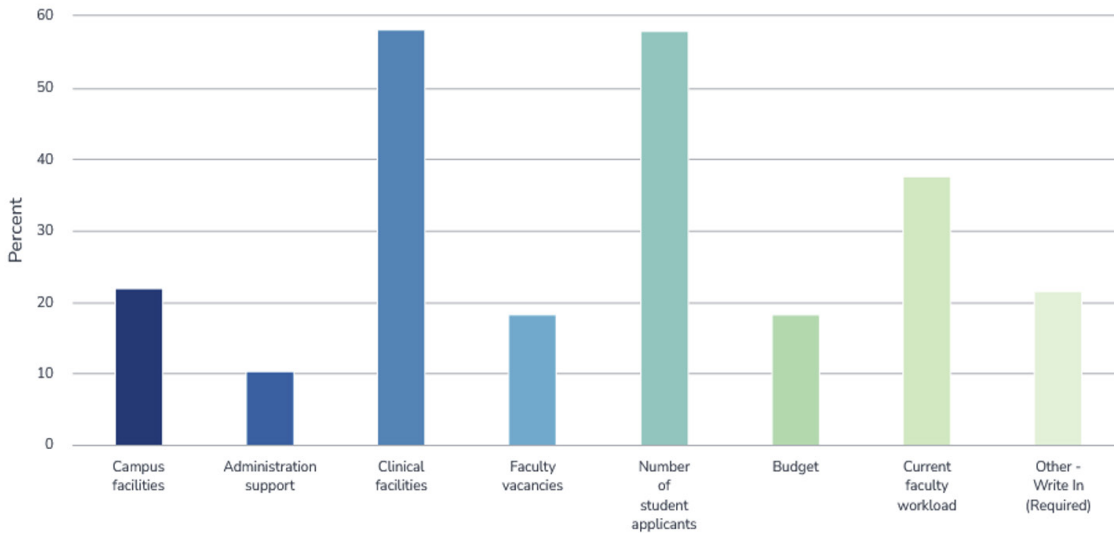
Following are some of the findings from the “hot off the press” 2023 survey, which included additional survey questions, based upon the need for data identified by members of the WAA:

	2015		2016		2017		2018		2019		2020		2021		2022		2023	
	Grads	Progs	Grads	Progs	Grad	Progs	Grads	Progs	Grads	Progs	Grads	Progs	Grads	Progs	Grads	Progs	Grads	Progs
MLA	75	7	45	7	45	6	33	6	47	5	38	5	12	4	10	4	5	2
CG	29	4	16	4	16	4	30	4	23	4	30	4	15	3	17	3	15	2
DMS	61	8	67	8	67	8	163	9	88	9	89	9	77	9	73	9	73	8
HT	467	36	362	37	357	34	363	36	365	32	294	33	314	36	360	36	344	37
HTL	77	8	75	9	60	8	63	8	57	8	52	9	59	9	62	9	48	10
MLS	3932	213	3997	232	3894	229	3772	235	3899	235	3964	232	4114	240	4162	245	4189	247
MLT	2886	246	2903	235	2453	241	3159	239	2932	237	2848	240	2844	238	2663	239	2638	237
PATH A	151	11	137	10	132	10	134	11	151	13	154	13	153	12	204	15	204	16
PHLEB	1808	65	1624	64	1615	60	1783	61	1421	53	1158	53	1120	51	1205	49	1146	48
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>9486</b>	<b>598</b>	<b>9226</b>	<b>606</b>	<b>8639</b>	<b>600</b>	<b>9501</b>	<b>609</b>	<b>8983</b>	<b>596</b>	<b>8627</b>	<b>598</b>	<b>8708</b>	<b>602</b>	<b>8759</b>	<b>609</b>	<b>8662</b>	<b>607</b>





## Total Program Expansion Barriers



## Average Number of vacancies per program type

Program Type	Sum of all Vacancies	Average number of Vacancies	Maximum # of Vacancies in all cohorts
CG	0	0	0
DCLS	0	0	0
DMS	89	12.7	39
HT	178	51	27
HTL	52	4.9	18
MLA	30	15	20
MLS	1961	8.1	67
MLT	2349	10.1	59
PATH A	14	0.88	4
PHLEB	671	14.6	54



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## 2. Communicate career pathways in laboratory science for new and transitioning professionals

The Communicating Career Pathways for New and Transitioning Students outlined a body of work to be accomplished. To accomplish the work, the larger workgroup formed subgroups as follows:

A1 - Raising the Visibility of the Laboratory Science Profession with High School Students

A2 - Raising the Visibility of the Laboratory Science Profession within Colleges and Universities (Strengthen Academic Partnerships)

B. Visualizing Career Pathways & Retention Strategies

C. Funding Sources for Educational Programs & Students This document summarizes the activities and results of this workgroup and its subgroups. A more detailed and comprehensive report was submitted and can be shared upon request.

Subgroup A1 - Raising the Visibility of the Laboratory Science Profession with High School Students. The goal of this subgroup was to raise the awareness of the laboratory profession to high school students. The majority of the subgroup's members have prior experience engaging high school students in stakeholder outreach and engagement. They also had the advantage of learning from the models of some of the subgroup members who are currently spearheading local and statewide initiatives.

In addition, a smaller subgroup formed to focus on defining a "virtual toolkit" for outreach and engagement of the high school audience. This is a highly engaged group continuously building on each other's ideas and offering solutions to one another when obstacles arise. With so much real-world experience at their disposal, the high school subgroup works to better understand the essential elements of a functional model, how to scale the model depending upon time and resources and the most important lessons discovered.

Subgroup A2 - Raising the Visibility of the Laboratory Science Profession within Colleges and Universities (Strengthen Academic Partnerships). The goal for this team was to raise awareness of laboratory science professions to college/university students.

One of the main priorities of this subgroup is to connect with Career Counselor Center professionals, they already created survey questions that they will delve more into during their presentation.

The second priority was to develop one-pagers that provides a visualization and explanation of various career ladder/opportunities for growth in the laboratory. Of course, this subgroup also realizes that we do not need to start from scratch and therefore, they also recommended that modifying existing documents on the topic is also key.

Having a presence at various conferences where we can promote visibility and showcase lab careers is a third for this group. For example, we already have contacts and presence at the annual conference of the American School Counselor's Association.

In addition, inclusion of underserved communities is key.

Subgroup B - Visualizing Career Pathways & Retention Strategies. The goal of this team was to highlight the exciting careers that can be pursued in the field of laboratory science and to visualize the career path for present and future generations of laboratory scientists.

This team identified 17 Career Pathways, and defined multiple priorities and activities to further support the recruitment and retention of laboratory professionals:

- Generate a list of career pathways, materials and tools in public health and clinical laboratory science careers
- Define education, training, experience, and certification required to move into and through these career pathways
- Define requirements to move into and through each career pathway
- Develop one online seminar in Year 1 to highlight career pathways in laboratory science.
- Use social media as a tool to promote awareness of Career Pathways

Retention Priorities:

- Benchmark innovative benefits programs (within and outside the healthcare sector) which could be attractive to laboratory science professionals
- Consider generational needs and wants of employees such as childcare and retirement plans
- Share ideas with employers to gain additional insight

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and ideas

- Host a table discussion at the WAA Summit to further discuss subgroup's findings and to determine next steps

### Subgroup C - Funding

The main goal of this subgroup was to make the existing funding resources available to students and program directors in the laboratory sciences visible. The group defined these priorities:

- There is a pressing need for lists of national, state, and locally funded resources for laboratory professionals regarding student loan forgiveness/repayment programs and scholarships. But also funding to support lab training programs. Currently, there is no comprehensive list that exists as a resource

for our community. The group met and created a draft spreadsheet for scholarship programs and loan repayment programs currently available. The list is a living document and the process to keep it current must be determined. It was decided by the group that state scholarship programs will be kept as a line item because listing all the changing state programs would quickly make the information obsolete.

- The group identified the need to create a resource for program directors on "how to" apply for a HRSA grant. There have been sites in the past that received HRSA grants to support the lab so having a resource on how to do that would amplify support for training programs.



*James Crawford, MD, PhD, discusses the skills of the laboratory workforce of the future at the Summit.*

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### 3. Standardize professional titles

Following is a summary of the activities and progress of the workgroup that undertook the third initiative, standardizing professional titles.

This team included representatives from COLA, AMT, ASCP BOCNLA/AAB, ABB, APHL, PAMET, VA, AMP, NAACLS, and several university laboratory science programs. It should be noted that several of the members of the team were from COLA. However, when the workgroup was polled for their preference for standard nomenclature for our profession as a whole or individual professionals, only three representatives from COLA cast votes, and each of these three votes were different. The other members of the team from COLA refrained from voting. Hence, the decisions made by this workgroup were not biased toward any preference of the COLA participants.

#### Background

This initiative builds upon the research published by ASCP in 2021-22 in these two documents:

Garcia E, Kundu I, Kelly M, et al. *The Clinical Laboratory Workforce: Understanding the Challenges to Meeting Current and Future Needs*. American Society for Clinical Pathology (Washington, DC) and Center for Health Workforce Studies, University of Washington (Seattle, WA). April 2021.<sup>1</sup>

Garcia EC, Kundu I, Kelly MA. *Blueprint for action*. 2022.<sup>2</sup>

The research in these publications identified inconsistencies in terms of describing our profession and professional titles. And although these inconsistencies are not the cause of the workforce shortage, the WAA agreed that we need a unified way to describe our profession, to include the diverse career options in laboratory science.

The workgroup aimed to:

1. Strengthen our profession's standing to recruit more people to the field
2. Adopt a broad designation for our professional identity that includes all the diverse academic, certification and career pathways, e.g. "Nursing"
3. Elevate public awareness of our overarching profession through consistent use to become more recognizable

The team did not want to endorse names for credentialing, titles used by employers or names of educational programs.

The team also did not want to add to the confusion by promoting a name that was not congruent with the recently adopted ASCP credentialing title of "Medical Laboratory Scientist."

#### Virtual meetings

The members of this workgroup held Zoom meetings on July 19, August 15, October 3 and December 7, 2023. It was apparent from the start that this subject is emotionally charged by many of the stakeholders. From the outset, it was evident that this subject evoked strong passionate views. The group acknowledged that the upcoming task would be challenging and that fostering an atmosphere of attentiveness towards differing perspectives would benefit the group's efforts. Differing points of view included:

1. Some states have codified the use of "Clinical Laboratory Scientists," whereas ASCP BOC credentials "Medical Laboratory Scientists."
2. There was disagreement about who can be referred to as a "Scientist" vs an "Analyst."
3. A point of view was shared that, (under CLIA) the bachelor and associate level laboratory professionals often do the same work at the bench level so they should have the same title. This evoked much discussion on the value of the bachelor's degree and the need to elevate the four-year degreed professional by distinguishing "Scientists" from "Technicians" if we are to be successful in attracting the next

<sup>1</sup> Garcia E, Kundu I, Kelly M, Guenther G, Skillman SM, Frogner B. *The Clinical Laboratory Workforce: Understanding the Challenges to Meeting Current and Future Needs*. American Society for Clinical Pathology (Washington, DC) and Center for Health Workforce Studies, University of Washington (Seattle, WA), Apr 2021.

<sup>2</sup> Garcia E, Kundu I, Kelly M. *The Clinical Laboratory Workforce: Understanding the Challenges to Meeting Current and Future Needs: Blueprint for Action*. American Society for Clinical Pathology (Washington, DC), Apr 2021.

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- generation.
4. Public Health laboratory professionals do not use “Clinical” or “Medical” to describe laboratory professionals. Moreover, the testing conducted in a public health laboratory is oriented towards the well-being of a community/society, encompassing the detection of infectious diseases and environmental contaminants that can have detrimental effects on human health. The team thought it would be important to be inclusive of Public Health laboratory professionals.

Following the first meeting, a table of potential standardized titles was circulated to the team, listing the pros and cons for each. At the next meeting on August 15, the discussion continued, and by the third meeting on October 3, the team initiated discussions on an all-encompassing, inclusive term to describe our profession, since reaching consensus on specific individual professional titles would prove challenging. For example, a Registered Nurse may identify as an RN, belonging to the discipline/profession/field of “Nursing.”

Suggestions for a name for the field or profession included:

1. Medical Laboratory Science
2. Clinical Laboratory Science
3. Laboratory Science
4. Clinical Laboratory Analysis

Following the meeting on October 3, the team members were asked to select their first choice plus two choices that they could support from among the following 10 options:

Naming our profession, an over-arching and inclusive term

- a. Medical Laboratory Science
- b. Laboratory Science
- c. Clinical Laboratory Science
- d. Clinical Laboratory Analysis

OR Naming professionals

- e. Medical Laboratory Scientist

- f. Laboratory Scientist
- g. Clinical Laboratory Scientist
- h. Clinical Laboratory Analyst
- i. Laboratory Science Professional
- j. Laboratory Professional

### Results

“Laboratory Science” as an overarching name for the profession received the most total votes.

The results were tabulated and distributed to members of the workgroup. Each member was given the opportunity via email and/or verbally during our December 7th meeting to share within the group if they strongly felt that “Laboratory Science” as an overarching name for our profession was not appropriate. No objections were submitted following this meeting.

### Next steps

During the December 7 meeting of the workgroup, we reviewed the polling results and did a final check to see if there were any remaining concerns to proceeding with the development of action items to promote the use of “Laboratory Science” as an overarching name for our profession. No concerns were raised.

The team agreed to communicate our decision to the other workgroups. Tammy Zinsmeister communicated the decision to the “Communicating Career Pathways for New and Transitioning Students” workgroup leader, and Kathy Nucifora communicated the decision to the “Strengthening the Data to Understand the Laboratory Workforce” workgroup leader. All felt it was important to provide this information so that the other two workgroups align by using “Laboratory Science” as they describe the profession in their communications to other organizations, government, schools and students.

The team agreed to:

1. Write a press release
2. Co-author an article and submit to a professional journal for publication
3. Draft “talking points” for podcasting and media communications

It should be noted that “Laboratory Science” was not

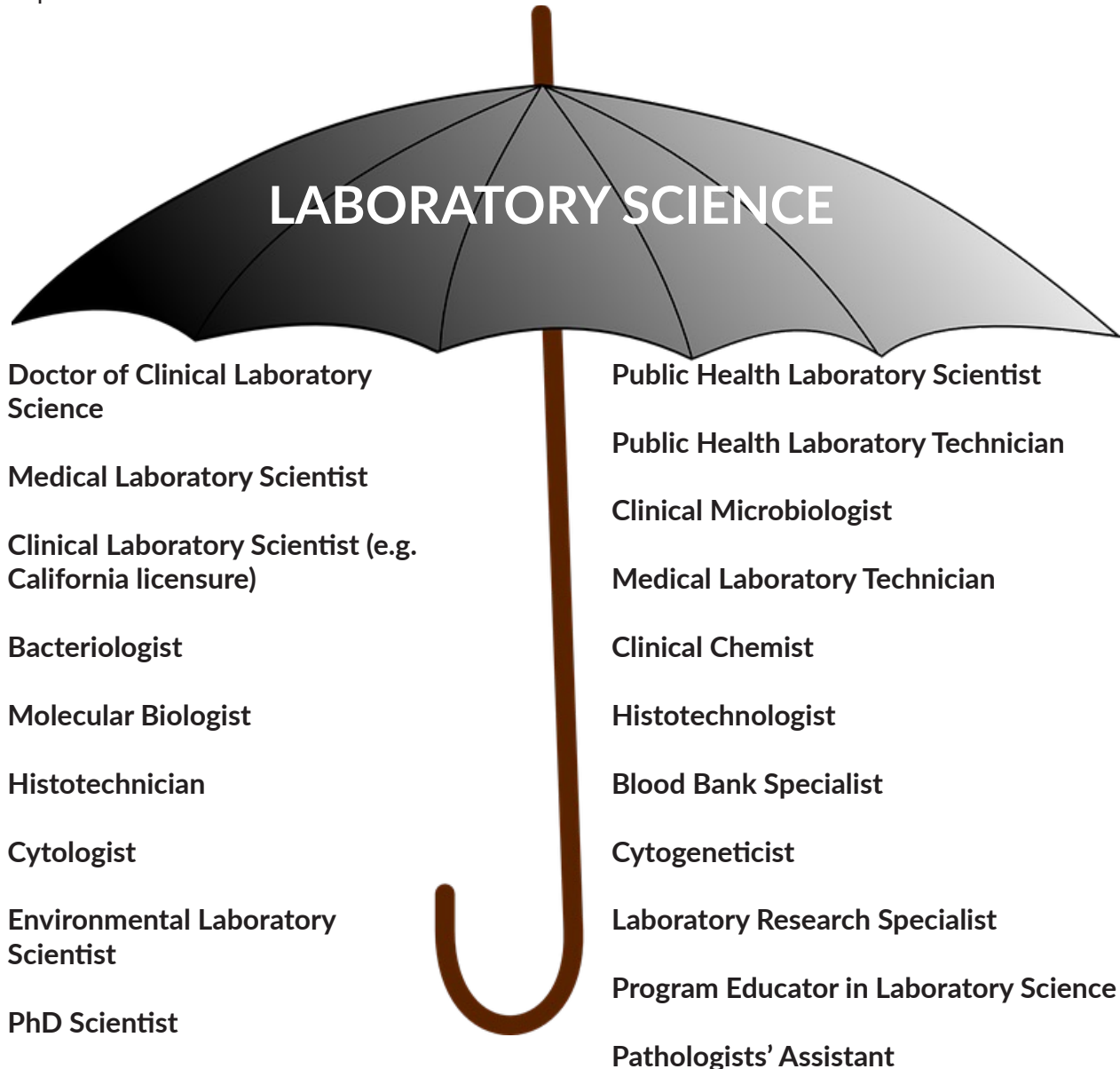
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the first choice of all members of the workgroup. However, the majority of the members have recognized “Laboratory Science” as a term that they can live with for referring to our collective profession.

The entire WAA met virtually on March 7 to review the agenda and logistics of the Summit. The Professional Titles workgroup recommended that the WAA promote the use of “laboratory science” as a name for our collective professions.



This graphic represents how the “umbrella” term for our profession, “laboratory science” is inclusive of the various laboratory science career options available to students or transitioning professionals. It is not a complete listing of potential laboratory science careers; rather it is an illustration of the relationship between the overall term of the profession and the specific careers that are included in “laboratory science.”

The term “laboratory science” describing our profession can be used similarly to the umbrella term “nursing.” A high school student, if asked what their plans are, could respond “I am going into laboratory science” or “I am going into nursing.”



## Key Trends that Will Affect Laboratory

# Staffing and Skills in the Future

Following the morning presentations from the three 2023 initiatives, a panel presentation regarding future trends in the industry served as a catalyst to spark discussion for the afternoon, when initiatives for the next year would be selected. The objective of this panel discussion was to encourage us to critically examine forthcoming changes that will impact laboratory staffing and professional competencies.

The panel consisted of three themes:

### Theme 1

Jonathon Genzen, MD, PhD, Medical Director, ARUP's Automation Team, shared his perspective on how robotics, automation and artificial intelligence may shift laboratory staffing and the skills they need in the future.

### Theme 2

Jim Crawford, MD, PhD, Northwell Health, Co-Founder of Clinical Lab 2.0, offered his perspective on the knowledge and skills laboratory professionals will need as reimbursement shifts away from volume-based and towards value-based, including the growing significance of laboratory data in the payment models of the future.

### Theme 3

Robert (Bob) Sautter, PhD HCLD/CC (ABB) MS MLS (ASCP) SM, RL Sautter Consulting, addressed emerging threats that will certainly have a future impact on laboratory science and public health.



(Left) Kelly Winter, PhD, Jonathan Genzen, MD, PhD, James Crawford, MD, PhD, Bob Sautter, PhD, Melanie Sloan, MS, MLS, SBB



# Closing the Gap: 2024 Priorities

For the remainder of the day, the Alliance held table discussions on potential initiatives for 2024-25. Based on the discussions and report-outs from each table, three initiatives were chosen.

First, the group decided that despite all the data we now have about the key factors contributing to the shortage, there are still gaps in what we think we know. It is important that we get on solid ground related to the true capacity of our nation's educational programs if we are to persuade others, such as policy makers, to aid in our cause. For example, we need better data to understand where in the country we have enough (or too many qualified candidates) to fill the available academic program slots and where there are too few applicants. Furthermore, we need to be on more solid footing in terms of the number of professionals needed to staff laboratories now and in the future.

NACCLS has agreed to attend the Summit annually to present the latest data, which can be used by other workgroups, e.g. grant readiness, to accomplish objectives. All workgroups are encouraged to bring forth ideas for additional data or additional data analysis that may serve to broaden awareness of the dire need for laboratory science professionals.

Second, a strong case was made that we need to communicate all the career paths in the field of laboratory science, both as they are now and as they might be in the future. This is important not only to get high school students to consider a degree to lead them to a laboratory profession which may include medical laboratory science (among all the other options open to them), but also to give people already working in the field hope that they can reach their dreams. Visualizing career paths and sharing them nationally with teachers, counselors and students in high schools and other college/university science department programs are great ways to get more people interested in the field. Also important is creating a digital space for potential candidates to visit to learn about all the exciting developments in the field.

The subgroups that will carry this forward are:

- Outreach to the next generation

### Workforce Action Alliance Priorities for the next 12 months:

1. Strengthen data to understanding the laboratory workforce
2. Communicate career pathways in laboratory science for new and transitioning professionals
3. Identify the future skills and rewards required for laboratory scientists

- o Presentation to an annual conference of high school Science teachers
- o Continue development and hosting of a virtual toolkit for educators, counselors and others
- o Develop resources to demonstrate the value of laboratory science to students of various ages (middle school, high school, community college)
- Grant readiness
  - o Select 1-2 grant opportunities to identify the necessary data and information required for application
- Focus on retention
  - o Identify creative avenues for employers to retain laboratory staff
  - o Evaluate diversity, equity and inclusion of the laboratory workforce

Third, the workgroup on future skills and rewards will focus on promoting laboratory science career ladders to healthcare professionals who might be interested in transitioning. This workgroup will have synergies with the "career pathways" subgroup above, and the these two groups plan to collaborate on combine efforts when possible. This effort also has synergies with the Clinical Lab 2.0 movement, which aims to equip future laboratory professionals with the leadership skills necessary to create efficiency, reduce waste and use laboratory data effectively to improve population health. Advancing the role of the laboratory in the changing healthcare ecosystem could potentially add to attraction and value of laboratory science as student select careers.





# Next Steps

In the coming months, the initiative teams will be working together to implement the action plans for the three priorities identified during the Summit. At the 2025 Summit, which will be held in Chandler, Arizona on May 6, the group will reconvene to celebrate their accomplishments and to choose new priorities for the 2025-2026 period.

If you are interested in learning more about the Workforce Action Alliance, you can send as email to [waa@cola.org](mailto:waa@cola.org).



(Left) Tammy Zinsmeister, B Phil, Katrina Moreau, MAT, MLS, Amy Leber, PhD, D(ABMM), Judith Robinson, JD, MPH, MIS

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# Appreciation of Supporters

On behalf of the WAA Planning Committee, we offer our sincere appreciation to AAB and COLA, whose financial support helped to cover the cost of the Summit. Thank you.



If you are interested in supporting the 2024 WAA, please email: [WAA@cola.org](mailto:WAA@cola.org)

## Contact Information

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