

# Enhancing Patient Safety and Workforce Sustainability Through ASCP BOC Credentials

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## ABSTRACT

### BACKGROUND

The global healthcare system faces a critical shortage of medical and public health laboratory professionals, hindering patient care with diagnosis and treatment delays. The American Society for Clinical Pathology (ASCP), Board of Certification (BOC) credentials are recognized as a key solution to uphold excellence in laboratory medicine and pathology, delivering precise test results crucial for 70% of medical decisions (Example A).

Credentials for medical laboratory professionals are preferred in many laboratories across the United States. Historically, and according to ASCP's 2022 Vacancy Study of Medical Laboratories in the U.S., the majority of laboratory departments still favor credentialed professionals. However, starting in 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic, increased testing volume, and early retirements led to a rise in workload and a temporary decline in the preference for credentials (Example B). Despite this, the overall preference for credentialed professionals remains high and is expected to return to pre-pandemic levels over the next few years.

### METHODS

This investigation analyzed the impact of BOC credentials via a comprehensive review of BOC records and credential attainment in 117 countries (Example C). It evaluated the credentials' effectiveness in ensuring competency, regulatory compliance, and professional development. Additionally, it assessed the BOC's contribution to mitigating workforce shortages, referencing the 2021 ASCP Wage Survey, 2022 ASCP<sup>i</sup> Survey, and Bureau of Labor Statistics forecasts, and examined their role in promoting inclusion, diversity, equity, and access (IDEA) within the laboratory profession.

### RESULTS

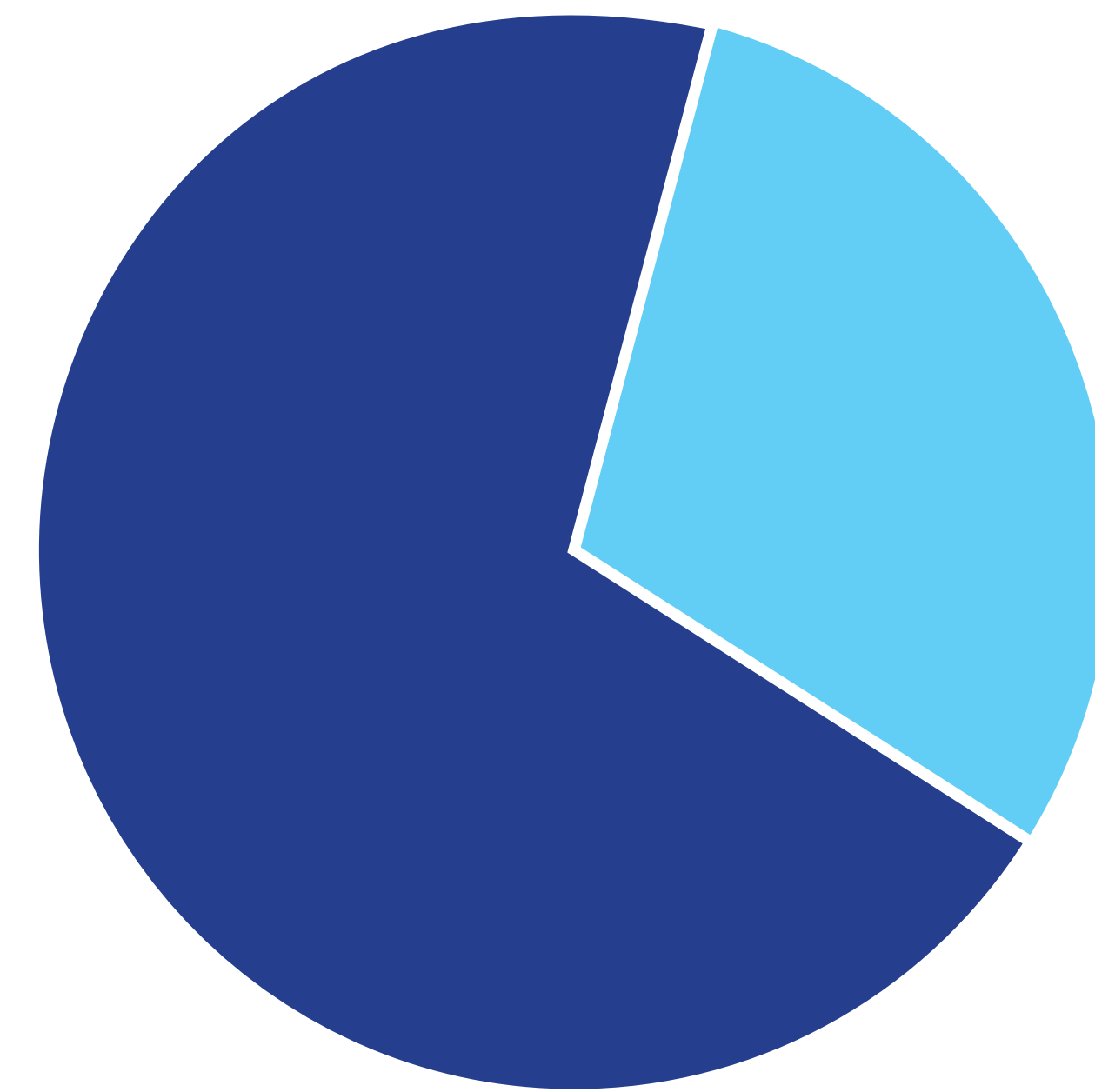
BOC credentials have significantly contributed to the competence and professionalism of the global laboratory workforce. They are recognized and endorsed by various international accreditation entities like ANAB, the Dubai Health Authority, and others, promoting competency-based examinations worldwide. BOC credentials are being embraced in various regions, including the Americas, Asia, and the Middle East & North Africa, helping to standardize laboratory practices to meet international safety and accuracy benchmarks such as ISO 15189 as prescribed by JCI and CAP. Furthermore, BOC credentials are now recognized in hundreds of countries around the world (Example C). In the Philippines, for instance, 35% of respondents to the 2022 BOC ASCP<sup>i</sup> Survey found employment outside of the Philippines, and 51% attributed their hiring to their BOC credential (Example D).

Credentialing enhances test reliability, builds trust, and ensures regulatory compliance. It also improves workforce dynamics by providing career advancement and professional development opportunities, attracting and retaining talent. In fact, in 2019, the Institute for Credentialing Excellence (ICE) administered a multi-organizational survey to measure the value that credential holders place on certification. This survey collected data from a large sampling (>12,000 individuals) of credential holders representing six organizations (four of which were healthcare organizations).

In May of 2019, ASCP BOC sent the survey to 47,384 individuals certified within the last 5 years. Of those who received the survey; 2,038 completed the 80 required questions. The most noteworthy difference came in response to the importance of participating in the Credential Maintenance Program (CMP [Example E.]).

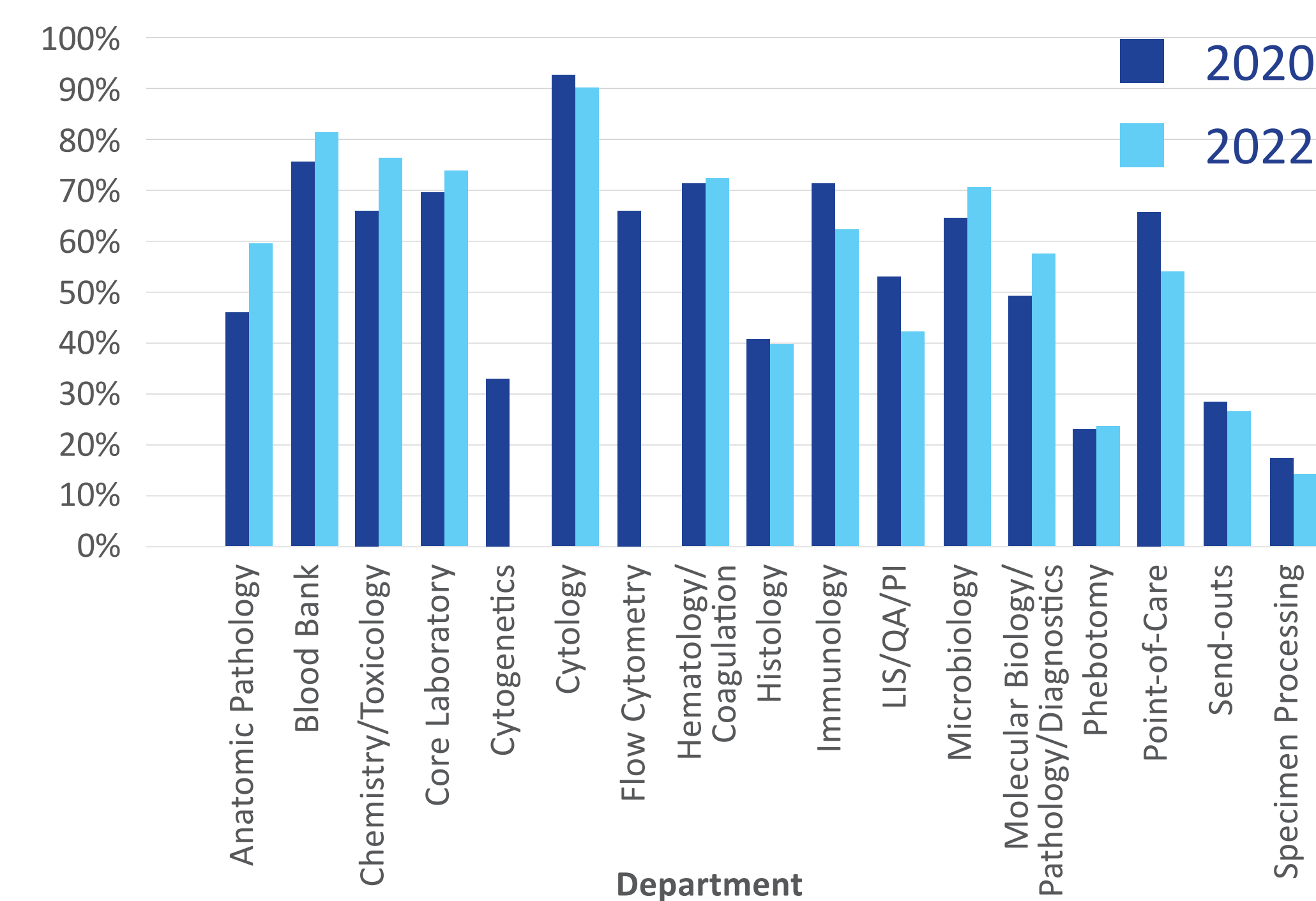
#### Example A

### 70% of Today's Medical Decisions Depend on Laboratory Test Results



#### Example B

### Credential Requirement in Hiring



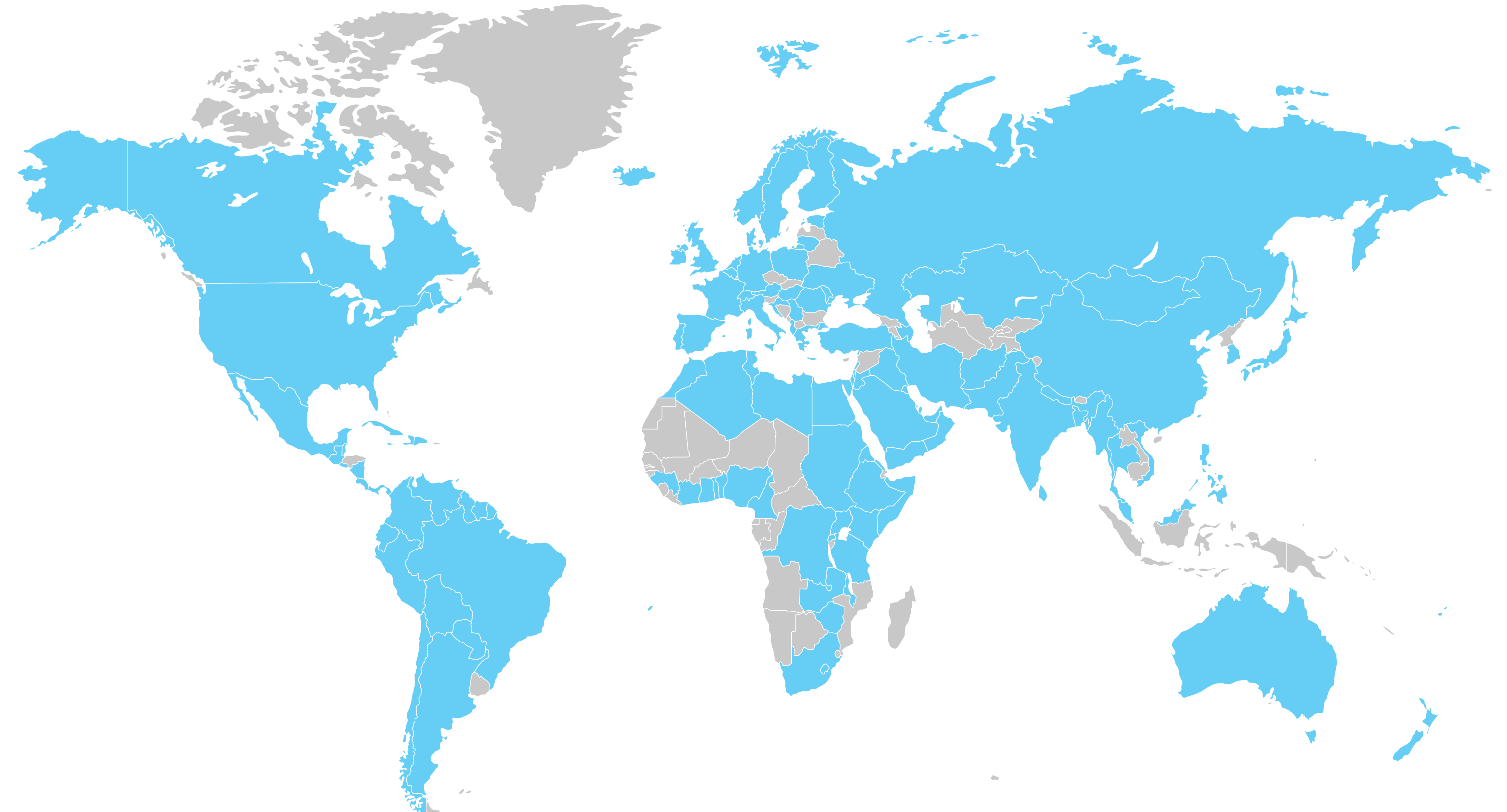
### CONCLUSION

BOC credentials play a crucial role in improving the standards of laboratory medicine and pathology, significantly affecting laboratory functionality and patient safety. They help alleviate global workforce shortages by certifying laboratory professionals' expertise and practical skills as a reliable foundation, enhancing workplace culture, and encouraging ongoing professional growth. Furthermore, BOC credentials are essential in promoting IDEA within the laboratory workforce. The importance of these credentials is underscored by the variety of disciplines covered in the ASCP BOC examination catalog, contributing to a sustainable, robust, and diverse global healthcare system. Future efforts should aim to expand these credentialing programs and use them to further enhance patient care quality, laboratory efficiency, and the durability of the workforce amidst changing healthcare demands.

Nothing to Disclose.

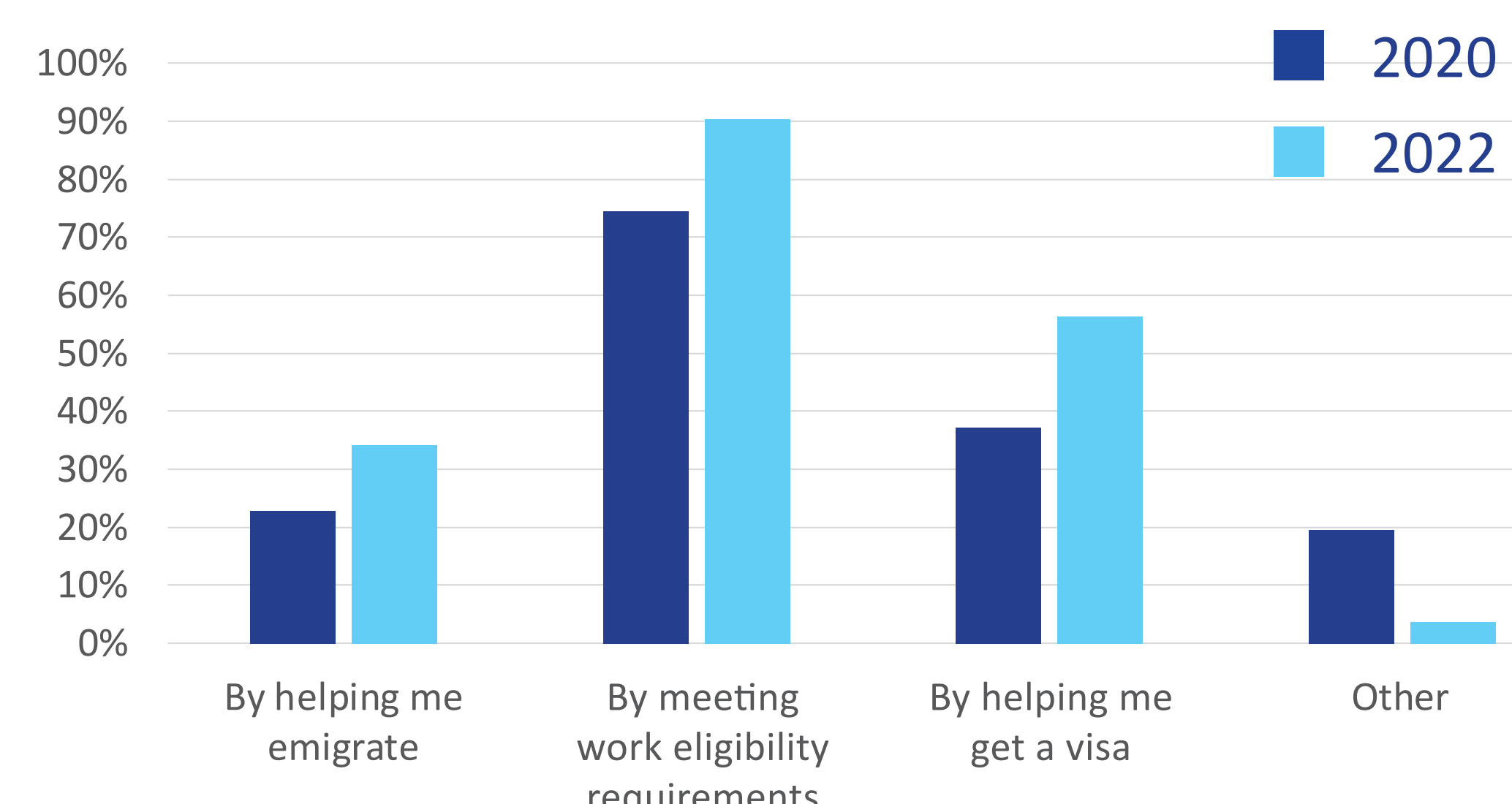
#### Example C

### ASCP<sup>i</sup> Credential Holders by Country of Education



#### Example D

### My ASCP or ASCP<sup>i</sup> Credential Enabled Me to Work Outside the Philippines



#### Example E

### Value of CMP

