

St. Louis, MO • March 2-3, 2026

# KNOWLEDGE LAB

Laboratory Management & Leadership Conference



## Monday, March 2

7:30a – 5:30p	Workforce Lounge Open		
7:00a – 9:00a	Breakfast & Coffee		
9:00a – 10:30a	<b>Welcome &amp; Opening Session</b>		
10:30a – 10:45a	Beverage Break		
10:45a – 11:45a	<b>Expand your Reach: Unlocking Hospital Laboratory Potential through Outreach</b>	Sandy Richman, MBA, C(ASCP) and Christina Nickel, MHA, MLS(ASCP) <sup>CM</sup> , CPHQ	<p>This session will concentrate on strategies for hospital laboratories to effectively enter the outreach market or grow their existing program, providing increased value back to the hospital and/or health system.</p> <p>Successfully launching and operating an outreach program requires capabilities that may be new to a traditional hospital-based laboratory. Couriers, connectivity, revenue cycle management, pricing, and client service are some of the functions that a successful outreach laboratory will need to address with internal and external customers. While that list can be daunting, there are feasible solutions to all of those challenges.</p> <p>Addressing these challenges is possible, as demonstrated by a case study of a successful hospital outreach program which concludes our session.</p>
	<b>Interpreting the Unexpected: Partnering with Clinicians When Results Don't Add Up</b>	Amitava Dasgupta, PhD and Melody Boudreaux Nelson, DCLS, CC(NRCC), MS, MLS(ASCP) <sup>CM</sup>	<p>This session will focus on real world case examples where analytical accuracy, biological variability, and communication gaps challenge laboratory interpretation. Every laboratory leader has had "that" phone call. The one where a physician or multidisciplinary partner is seeking answers and exploring a root cause for discordant results. Thus, this session will center on strategies to approach these situations constructively, not defensively.</p>

11:45a – 12:15p	Wellness Break & Activities		
1:15p – 2:00p	Designated Exhibit Hall Time		
2:00p – 3:00p	<b>Building the Blueprint: Developing a Hospital-Based Medical Laboratory Science Program Proforma and Winning Approval</b>	Kristin Haduch, MLS(ASCP); Sean Tucker, MLS (ASCP) <sup>CM</sup> , MBA	Dive into the financials and advocacy journey needed to develop a hospital-based Medical Laboratory Science (MLS) program! This presentation takes you through the development of a comprehensive business proforma that explains the cost and benefits of growing-your-own talent. We'll break down how talent recruitment forecasting, preceptor capacity planning, accreditation requirements, and strategic partnerships come together to shape a sustainable, high-impact educational model.
	<b>Reimagining Laboratory Education: Building Competency, Creativity, and Connection in the Digital Era</b>	Kamran Mirza, MD, PhD, FASCP, MLS(ASCP); Cassidy Wood	
3:00p – 3:15p	Beverage Break		
3:15p – 4:15p	<b>Communicating Effectively While Managing Conflict: Skills for the Laboratory Professional</b>	Cherie V. Petersen, BA	Conflict most often occurs with the confluence of high stress and high emotion. With the critical nature of diagnostic testing being performed on behalf of patients, along with our profession's consummate commitment to research, precision diagnostics, quality, turnaround time, and improving patient outcomes, laboratory professionals are increasingly confronted with situations where the potential for conflict exists. Now juxtapose the fact that many laboratory professionals gravitated to this career because they were deeply passionate about contributing to patient care while, self-admittedly, wanting to avoid the engagement that comes with bedside care. This is what often leaves them feeling less confident in conflict management skills. This session will provide laboratory professionals with a greater understanding of the factors that lead to conflict; it will illuminate why avoiding conflict can have negative and unintended consequences in the workplace, on personal job satisfaction, and even how it can have downstream effects on patient care. Participants will leave with a greater understanding and appreciation for the root causes of conflict and feel more confident addressing it with a fresh perspective and new tools for their conflict management toolbox. Who knows, it's quite possible they may even leave the session feeling like conflict management is their new superpower!

	<b>The Importance of Good Governance in Lab Stewardship—Setting Your Program Up for Success</b>	Sandy Richman, MBA, C(ASCP); Christopher Farnsworth, PhD; Sean Tucker, MLS(ASCP) <sup>CM</sup> , MBA	Proper governance is the most important and sometimes the most challenging aspect of developing an effective lab stewardship program. Sandy Richman, VP of ARUP Healthcare Advisory Services, will walk through establishing a high-functioning interdepartmental laboratory stewardship committee. Sean Tucker, Executive Director of Labs at BJC St Louis Children's Washington University Academic Campus, will share how his team successfully navigated challenges to gain support for and develop an effective lab stewardship committee.
<b>4:30p – 5:30p</b>	<b>General Session - Grief Management in the Medical Laboratory Workforce</b>	Dana Powell Baker, Ed.D., MBA, MS, MLS(ASCP) <sup>CM</sup> , CPH	Laboratory professionals face various forms of grief, whether it's a significant personal loss (such as losing a loved one, going through a divorce, or losing a job) or professional grief that is often worsened by burnout and low morale at work. If left unaddressed, grief can lead to issues such as job dissatisfaction, increased absenteeism, reduced efficiency, and lower productivity. To tackle these issues, leaders must implement strategies that include understanding relevant institutional policies (such as bereavement leave) and available support resources for staff. These approaches, along with others to be discussed during this interactive session, are crucial for enhancing professional well-being and fostering resilience among team members.
<b>5:30p – 6:30p</b>	Gateway to Dinner Happy Hour, sponsored by the Heart of America Chapter		

## Tuesday, March 3

7:30a – 6:00p	Workforce Lounge Open		
8:00a – 9:00a	Breakfast & Coffee Available		
9:00a – 10:00a	<b>General Session - From Bullying to Burnout: Today's Laboratory Leadership Opportunities</b>	Patty Eschliman, MHA, MLS(ASCP)DLM, CPC	Laboratory staffing, recruitment, and retention are major challenges in the laboratory today, but what if the real issue lies within your team? Is there a bully among your staff? Are your laboratory leaders sufficiently trained to address mental health concerns or are they contributing to burnout? Counseling, coaching, and mentoring are often used interchangeably when describing how to manage employees, but they are significantly different. Coaching encourages others to grow by using their unique strengths and internal powers to drive change. Learn how to be a better coach so that you can influence others while creating profound and sustainable positivity that improves team outcomes.
10:00a – 10:15a	Beverage Break		
10:15a – 11:15a	<b>Running in the Dark: Optimizing Laboratory Night Shift Operations for Improved Staffing and Quality Outcomes</b>  <b>Reenergizing Your Quality Management Program</b>	Charles McDonald, MLS(ASCP) <sup>CM</sup>  Cassie Hartgrave, MPH, MLS(ASCP) <sup>CM</sup>	Labs operate around the clock and rely on night shift teams, who often face challenges such as limited staff, fewer resources, and less supervision. In this interactive session, we will explore these issues, including inconsistent quality checks and communication gaps between shifts, by sharing practical tips and real-life examples for improving workflows and staffing. Participants will join hands-on discussions to quickly apply solutions that boost efficiency, reduce errors, and help things run more smoothly. We will also cover how to use the ASCP Negotiation and Advocacy Toolbox to request stronger support from leadership for 24/7 labs. By the end, you will have practical tools, advice, and resources to help night shift teams perform better, feel more satisfied at work, and provide better patient care.  Reenergizing a laboratory quality management program is essential for sustaining excellence, ensuring regulatory compliance, and fostering a culture of continuous improvement. This initiative involves a strategic reassessment of existing quality systems, engaging staff at all levels, and integrating modern tools and methodologies. Key components include revitalizing training programs, enhancing internal audit processes, and leveraging data analytics to identify trends and areas for improvement. Leadership plays a pivotal role in setting clear expectations, promoting accountability, and recognizing achievements. By aligning quality objectives with organizational goals, laboratories can

			improve efficiency, reduce errors, and strengthen stakeholder confidence. A reenergized program also emphasizes proactive risk management and encourages innovation in problem-solving. Ultimately, this transformation not only improves operational performance but also reinforces the laboratory's commitment to delivering reliable, high-quality results in a dynamic and demanding environment.
<b>11:15a – 11:45a</b>	Dedicated Exhibit Hours		
	Lunch		
<b>11:45a – 12:45p</b>	Chapter Networking Meet-Up		
<b>12:45p – 1:15p</b>	Wellness Break & Activities		
<b>1:30p – 2:30p</b>	<p><b>Going the Distance: The RUN Mindset for Emerging Laboratory Leaders</b></p>	<p>Laura Gary, MLS(ASCP)</p>	<p>This interactive session is designed for emerging laboratory leaders who want to strengthen their confidence and learn how to do hard things in both their professional and personal lives. Laura Gary shares how her experiences as a Medical Laboratory Scientist and marathon runner shaped her resilience and belief in her own abilities. She introduces the RUN Mindset Framework (Reflect, Understand, Nurture) to help participants connect what excites them with meaningful leadership behaviors in the laboratory.</p> <p>Through storytelling, practical reflection activities, and simple leadership tools, attendees will see how taking one step at a time can build perseverance, improve team culture, and support long-term career growth. Participants will also explore how nurturing their own strengths and purpose can create a positive impact on the people they lead.</p> <p>Everyone will leave with clear strategies they can begin using right away, along with a symbolic reminder to help them continue “going the distance” in their leadership journey.</p>
	<p><b>Data-Driven Quality &amp; Compliance: Leveraging Real-World Metrics to Elevate Clinical Laboratory Operations</b></p>	<p>Dr. Katrina Burruss, DHS, CLC, MLS, CPCO</p>	<p>In an era where laboratorians are expected to deliver rapid results with rock-solid accuracy, data is no longer “nice to have”—it is the foundation of high-reliability lab operations. This session explores how clinical laboratories can use real-world performance metrics to strengthen quality systems, enhance regulatory compliance, and streamline operational efficiency. Attendees will learn how to transform raw data into actionable insights by integrating key indicators such as turnaround time trends, pre-analytic error rates, QC patterns, proficiency testing outcomes, instrument performance metrics, and</p>

			compliance audit findings. Using practical examples from real laboratory environments, this session demonstrates how intentional data monitoring can drive smarter decision-making, reduce variability, improve patient safety, and support continuous readiness for CLIA, CAP, COLA, and other regulatory bodies.
<b>2:30p – 2:45p</b>	Beverage Break		
	<b>Beyond the Binder: A Laboratory Guide to New Hire Safety Orientation</b>	Jason P. Nagy, PhD, MT (ASCP), QLS	As staffing challenges continue to be an area of concern for laboratory leaders, individuals across various educational and occupational levels are being sought to enter the lab. The chemical, biological, and physical risks associated with working in the lab remain regardless of prior experience. Fortunately, leaders can educate new employees to raise awareness of these risks, help them comprehend the policies and procedures in place, and demonstrate how to properly use the engineering controls designed to keep them safe. Learn how to effectively train new staff to become components of, and key contributors to the culture of safety in your labs.
<b>2:45p – 3:45p</b>	<b>LabLine: True Stories from the Leaders Who Lived Them</b>	Christina Nickel, MHA, MLS(ASCP)CM, CPHQ; Sean Tucker, MLS (ASCP)CM, MBA; Patty Eschliman, MHA, MLS(ASCP)DLM, CPC; Cherie Peterson, Laura Gary, MLS(ASCP); Laura Severs, MHA, MLS(ASCP) <sup>CM</sup>	LabLine is the signature leadership panel for laboratory professionals, delivering storytelling at its best. Our session dives into unforgettable real-life employee challenges—those “you can’t make this up” moments—and explores what leaders did, what they learned, and what they would do differently today. From surprising HR twists to leadership decisions under pressure, these stories reveal the human side of managing complex lab teams.
<b>4:00p – 5:00p</b>	<b>Closing Session: ASCP Internship Academy - Creating a Successful Laboratory Internship Program</b>	John A. Baci, MBA, CPM	Developing a successful high-school or college student internship program will generate a constant pipeline of short and long-term entry-level staffing talent for your laboratory. The ASCP Internship Academy is a comprehensive resource for the ASCP and KnowledgeLab community to encourage, educate, and facilitate laboratory professionals to develop and maintain a STEM-based internship program exposing students to careers in the clinical laboratory industry. This interactive session is designed to support any laboratory who has or is considering their own laboratory internship program.