



American Society for
Clinical Pathology®

Washington Office

1225 New York Avenue NW

Suite 250

Washington, DC 20005-6516

T 202.347.4450

F 202. 347.4453

www.ascp.org

March 26, 2009

The Honorable Cy Thao
Chair, Licensure Division of the House Committee on
Health Care and Human Services Policy and Oversight
Minnesota House of Representatives
359 State Office Building, 100 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.
Saint Paul, Minnesota 55155

Dear Chairman Thao:

On behalf of the American Society for Clinical Pathology (ASCP), I write to thank you for your leadership in sponsoring legislation (HF1249/SF0999) to license clinical laboratory professionals in the state of Minnesota. As you no doubt are aware, these measures, substantially improved over last year's bills, are the product of extensive negotiations between the laboratory community's major stakeholders to create a consensus laboratory personnel licensure bill.

The ASCP is a nonprofit medical specialty society representing 130,000 members nationwide and 3,700 members in Minnesota. We also represent 10,000 ASCP certified laboratory professionals in Minnesota. Our members are board certified pathologists, other physicians, clinical scientists, certified medical technologists and technicians, cytotechnologists, and educators. ASCP is one of our nation's largest medical specialty societies and is the world's largest organization representing the field of laboratory medicine and pathology. As the leading provider of continuing education for pathologists and medical laboratory personnel, ASCP enhances the quality of the profession through comprehensive educational programs, publications, and self-assessment materials.

Laboratory medicine is frequently overlooked, but its impact on patient health cannot be overstated. *Sixty to seventy percent of patient diagnoses and treatments are based on laboratory tests.* Consequently, optimal patient care is dependent on accurate and reliable laboratory testing, which in turn is dependent on the availability of qualified laboratory personnel. By setting basic minimum requirements for the education, training and competency of laboratory personnel, HR 1249 and SF0999 help protect the public health through quality laboratory testing. Several studies published in the prestigious *Journal of the American Medical Association* suggest that education, training and competency examinations (the core components of HF 1249 and SF 0999) can improve the quality of laboratory testing.

The Honorable Cy Thao

March 26, 2009

Page 2

These bills require clinical laboratory *technologists* to possess a baccalaureate degree and appropriate training or experience. Clinical laboratory *technicians* must possess an associate degree and appropriate training or experience. These health care professionals must also pass competency examinations. These standards are the consensus requirements used by employers, state licensure boards, federal agencies, etc. Data collected by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and analyzed by ASCP indicates that licensure neither adversely affects laboratory personnel labor markets nor increases costs (wages). Because of well-crafted grandfathering provisions recognizing individuals' education and work experience, the measure shouldn't disrupt currently employed clinical laboratory personnel or the laboratories that employ them.

Patients deserve to have their laboratory tests performed by qualified professionals. Thank you for your help to make this a reality for all of Minnesota's patients. If you have any questions about these measures or licensure, please do not hesitate to contact me or Matthew Schulze, ASCP's Senior Manager for Federal and State Affairs, at (202) 347-4450 or by email at matthew.schulze@ascp.org.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Barbara McKenna".

Barbara McKenna, MD, FASCP
President, ASCP

cc: Kate Perushek
Vickie Benson