

10/21/2013

RE: State of Montana Laboratory Personnel Licensure

I write this letter in vehement objection to the continuation of the annual state licensure for laboratory personnel. The criteria for this state license is essentially national certification by a recognized certification agency, payment of a fee, and documentation of annual continuing education.

The main national ASCP, American Society for Clinical Pathology, certification now has a continuing education requirement for annual renewal.

The national trend for medical professionals is National Certification. Thirty seven states are satisfied with national certification. State certification serves California and Florida well because they have a large immigrant population of highly qualified medically trained immigrants who can meet the requirements for the state exam and licensure. Yes, most licensure states have a qualifying exam! When I questioned the purpose for the license at one of the early board meetings I was told it was to grandfather in all the present lab workers at the Scientist level, whatever their education because that was the equivalent of the work they were doing.

When I questioned the Continuing Education requirement, the response was "To leverage administrators to budget this and to encourage attendance at state meetings." Virtually all of these meetings take place in the western part of the state. If they are scheduled anywhere else it is "too far," yet we professionals practicing in true Eastern Montana are expected to make the effort to travel west. The Continuing Education year has finally been established as May 1 to April 30. Many of the acronyms in the statute and continuing education list were obsolete or inaccurate, although many have recently been corrected.

Almost half the "fee" is to cover the State of Montana computer.

HCFA, Healthcare Financing Administration, the Medicare and Medicaid reimbursement agency does not recognize the Montana license, but does recognize national certification.

Early in the history of Montana Licensure, losing the lawsuit regarding Nursing Personnel performing laboratory tests because laboratory testing is included in their "Scope of Practice" as stated in the RN license makes a mockery of the education and stringent Quality Control and Proficiency practices of a laboratory that meets the HCFA and state laboratory licensure requirements. Physicians assistants as testing personnel has not been addressed by the Montana laboratory Personnel license yet lab proficiency is implied in the Physician Assistant Scope of Practice.

Waived tests as listed by the Food and Drug Administration, FDA, continue to grow in number and serve a purpose in medical practice and improved patient care. The state personnel licensure law does not address this. With the serious shortage of laboratory personnel in Montana, the minutes of the Clinical Laboratory Licensing board indicate that even the State Public Health Laboratories has chosen to hire individuals with science degrees, but not laboratory credentials.

These are many of the reasons I feel that the licensure is a mockery of my education, training, and experience and does absolutely nothing to enhance respect for my chosen profession or improve my performance as an ASCP Nationally Certified Medical Laboratory Scientist.

I would appreciate your serious consideration of retiring the Clinical Laboratory Scientist License.

Respectfully,

Suzanne Thomason, MT(ASCP)  
Box 264, Terry, MT 59349