

October 4, 2013

RE: HB 525

To Whom It May Concern:

I have been a Clinical Laboratory Scientist for over 20 years and have worked out of state as well as in the State of Montana. Most Clinical Laboratory Science programs have specific curricula and requirements to graduate and become certified but not everyone chooses or there is no government requirement to become certified. That is where licensure plays such an important role. Not all states have licensure but in those states that do, there is a higher degree of qualified individuals working in the laboratory.

Clinical laboratory professionals are responsible for implementing the entire scope of laboratory practice, collection of the specimens for analysis, testing, and reporting of results. There is a wide range of complexities to each of these processes that insures that all results are accurate, precise and presented to the physician in a timely manner. Reliable laboratory test results are central to quality health care and competent clinical laboratory professionals are vital to providing this care. Over 80% of treatment decisions are directly related to results provided by the laboratory personnel. There has to be a standard for evaluating competent personnel in the laboratory so state licensure was instituted to protect the public from unqualified individuals that do not meet pre-determined levels of competency. The state I also worked in prior to Montana did not have licensure and I observed practices that would be considered sub-standard. The laboratory has become quite sophisticated in instrumentation and new technology so it is imperative that individuals working in the laboratory keep up with continuing education and learning opportunities. Montana requires 14 hours of continuing education to maintain licensure so you have a greater pool of highly trained personnel. Without licensure you have people from different backgrounds and different levels of education that are not fully trained to meet the demands of our state-of-the-art laboratories.

State Licensure provides the best mechanism to assure that clinical laboratory services are performed with an adequate level of professional competence.

Vivian Schaffer, MLS(ASCP)