Metropolitan Medical Laboratory Enters Its Second Century of Service

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In 1914, Dr. Frederick Howe Lamb, a 26 year-old family practice physician in Davenport, Iowa began a study of the essential nature of diseases that would result in the introduction of Pathology as a new medical specialty in this country. His transformation to an expert pathologist was acknowledged by his election as vice president of the American Board of Pathology in the 1930’s and later his election to terms as president of both the College of American Pathologists and the American Society of Clinical Pathologists.

Working with St. Luke’s and Mercy Hospitals in Davenport and St. Anthony’s Hospital in Rock Island, Dr. Lamb offered a set of standardized instrumentation and procedures that helped to introduce Anatomic and Clinical Pathology to the Twentieth Century. Dr. Lamb’s individual efforts to establish conformity and standardization with regard to the practice of laboratory medicine became an accepted approach with local medical professionals and grew into the 400-employee Quad City-based company we know today as Metropolitan Medical Laboratory.

Dr. Lamb’s original clinical roster featured a menu of 12 tests. Today, Metro Lab performs over 1,600 different tests and provides 3,500 ordering clients with over 6.5 million test results for the 230,000 patients seen every year. 70% of the objective information that doctors use to make their diagnostic decisions comes from laboratory data.

So what kinds of staff members does it take to run a lab like Metro?

Pathologists are the physicians who evaluate tissues and cells under a microscope to determine whether or not disease is present – diseases such as cancer and leukemia. Metro is staffed by 8 Pathologists, each of whom is certified by the American Board of Pathology and many of them have sub-specialty certifications. A number of Metro Pathologists have published articles regarding anatomic and clinical disease processes.

Cytotechnologists prepare specimens for microscopic examination, then evaluate the specimens for signs of abnormalities and, following established standards and practices, prepare provisional diagnoses to be reviewed by a Pathologist. Cytotechnologists must assure proper usage of instruments, perform preventive maintenance and verify accuracy of instrument calibration.

Histologic Technicians prepare slides from tissue sections for microscopic examination and diagnosis by a Pathologist. They prepare sections of human or animal tissue for immediate examination, using rapid tissue processing and frozen section technique to freeze, cut, mount and stain tissue specimens received from surgery. Histotechs prepare slides of specimens, using specified stains to enhance visibility of organisms or cellular products under the microscope.

Medical Technologists/Medical Laboratory Scientists/Clinical Laboratory Scientists perform medical chemical laboratory tests, procedures and analysis. These professionals analyze body fluids, perform complex analyses, and test blood for compatibility before transfusion. Duties may include obtaining blood samples from patients and instrument maintenance. Customer service skills are needed for interactions with patients, physicians and hospital staff.

Phlebotomists obtain and prepare specimens for analysis or other medical purposes using the appropriate equipment and following established protocol. Phlebotomists verify a patient’s identity and,
after drawing the specimen, accurately label, store and distribute specimens for subsequent processing. Some Phlebotomists travel to nursing homes or patient residences to obtain specimens.

**Specimen Processors** receive and prepare patient specimens for testing. They also prepare specimens for Courier transport to other Metro sites or to outside reference labs for analysis. Specimen Processors enter patient information into company data bases for reporting and billing purposes. They also answer both internal and external questions advising other departments/personnel or physician offices in regard to specimen collection and processing.

**Couriers** drive company vehicles to transport patient specimens between physician offices, hospitals, nursing homes and other health care facilities. Couriers also transport specimens to Metro facilities and/or between Metro facilities along with the delivery of supplies and reports. Couriers interact with clients as customer service agents and as representatives of Metro Lab in general.

**Client Service Associates** receive patient test orders from physicians/clients and enter pertinent data into the computer for test processing and billing purposes. Client Service Associates perform a variety of clerical and customer service tasks with a focus on maintaining positive client affiliations. Duties include a high volume interaction with clients via the telephone.

**Patient Service Associates** ensure that patients are expedited through the lab in an efficient manner. Patient Service Associates register patients, enter physician orders, make computer inquiries, process physician orders, monitor standing orders, verify the accuracy of central scheduling orders, scan documents and conduct finance-related edits.

**Insurance Claim Specialists** process denials and non-payments to ensure that issues received from Medicare, Medicaid, commercial payers and customers are resolved in a proper and legal manner. Insurance Claim Specialists make calls to all payer sources with the intention of resolving disputes in a favorable manner. These Billing Department employees research customer account histories and payer source websites in order to determine accurate claim submission.

**Medical Transcriptionists** perform moderate to complex clerical duties, which require a high level of proficiency. Duties include transcribing dictation, performing word processing, entering patient information into various data bases, printing and faxing reports, distributing mail, ordering office supplies, attending assigned meetings, assisting with filing and completing other clerical duties as assigned.

**Systems Analysts** analyze and evaluate existing or proposed computer systems to process data as efficiently and as quickly as possible. They prepare program specifications; encode, test, debug and install operating programs; and document and validate new and/or updated programs. System Analysts make computer interfaces to connect your doctor’s office with Metro to interchange lab results and insurance data.

**Metro is able to send patient test results to any ordering provider – by computer, by fax or by Courier. Appointments aren’t necessary at any Metro location. Go to [www.metromedlab.com](http://www.metromedlab.com) to find a location near you. An average appointment should take less than 20 minutes. If you’re concerned about the wait time, call ahead and ask what the patient volumes are that day.**

**Your good health continues to be our passion. Metropolitan Medical Laboratory, PLC, is one of the largest accredited laboratories in the states of Illinois and Iowa, and has provided this community with quality laboratory services for the past 100 years. Next time you need lab work done, tell your doctor, “I want to go to Metro.”**