

Facing the Challenge: Explore Lab Science - K-12 Outreach Program

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Clinical laboratory professionals play a critical role in health care. Many medical diagnoses are based on laboratory test results. These laboratory professionals seldom have direct patient contact and consequently, their critical role in health care is unnoticed. The United States is facing a severe and problematic shortage of qualified laboratory personnel due to the discontinuation of clinical laboratory educational programs, careers that offer higher salaries for the same amount of education, and an aging work force.

The Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) Bureau of Laboratories (BOL) recognizes the critical shortage of laboratory professionals and offers one educational solution through an outreach program, Explore Lab Science, for kindergarten through 12th grade (K-12) students. This program has been successful in attracting young minds to consider laboratory sciences as their career path.

The Explore Lab Science (ELS) program helps children understand the role that laboratory professionals have in health care. The goal is to introduce children to laboratory sciences at an early age. The ELS program hopes their interaction with the students, along with hands-on, age appropriate science activities will pique student's natural curiosity to explore laboratory science so they may remember their experience later in life when deciding on a college major or career.

School Demonstration (Demo) Days provide local schools with laboratory science activities designed to supplement school curricula. School visits can be arranged by contacting Sandra Lenneman MSA, MT(ASCP) SBB. She is the "Explore Lab Science" program lead for MDHHS BOL, K-12 Outreach. Sandra may be reached by email at LennemanS1@michigan.gov or by telephone at (517) 335-9190.

On-line educational activities are another way to reach out to young explorers. The Explore Lab Science (ELS) website provides students with educational information on laboratory science. Interactive media allows students to receive information and participate in science activities at home. Please visit the ELS web site at www.michigan.gov/explorelabscience.



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Explore Lab Science is one way the state public health laboratory hopes to educate, engage, and inspire future generations of laboratory professionals.