WHAT DOES ASM OFFER CLINICAL MICROBIOLOGISTS?
Division C (Clinical Microbiology) is the largest ASM Division with 5,000 (as of 2013) members worldwide, with 3,343 in the U.S.

The U.S. Division C comprises 12% of US full members.

The distribution by degree for U.S. members of Division C is BS (38%), MS (19%), PhD (21%), MD (12%) and other (9%). Many members (33%) are employed in hospitals. Another 14% are affiliated with universities and 10% are found in industry.

About 33% say diagnosis and testing is their primary job function; this is most frequently aligned with employment in hospitals and clinical laboratories.

The majority of members employed within the academic sector identify research as their primary function.
Clinical microbiology as a profession faces a number of challenges, including the prospect of losing some of its identity in the burgeoning field of clinical laboratory science. Increasing automation in diagnostic laboratories has enabled non-microbiologists to perform testing that previously required specific microbiology training and experience. Compounding this development has been the introduction of immunologic and molecular diagnostic assays that resemble classical chemistry tests more than microbiology tests. The long-standing boundaries between the clinical laboratory specialties have begun to blur.

However, this loss of identity clearly has not been accompanied by a diminishing need for individuals with clinical microbiology expertise.

The question before me is who is looking out for the interests of clinical microbiologists? In my view the American Society for Microbiology is doing this exceedingly well. Clinical microbiologist members of ASM dedicate innumerable hours to support and advance the microbiological sciences through volunteer activities. Working in tandem with a competent and dedicated staff at the Society’s Headquarters, many successes have been realized and they are well worth noting and celebrating. The goal of this brochure is to do just that – respond to the question – what is ASM doing for me as a clinical microbiologist? I am pleased to present in the content that follows the numerous ongoing initiatives and benefits and the remarkable progress that has been made by the Society on behalf of myself and my colleagues in clinical microbiology.

Joseph Campos, PhD, Secretary, ASM

Joe Campos, Director of the Microbiology Laboratory at Children’s National Medical Center, Washington DC, has been a member of ASM since 1974. He has been Dean of the American College of Microbiology and chaired the Committee on Laboratory Practices in Microbiology. He is a Diplomate of the American Board of Medical Microbiology, a Fellow of the American Academy of Microbiology, and has served on several editorial boards and other committees during his association with ASM.
advocacy

ASM REPRESENTS MY INTERESTS REGARDING REGULATORY AND OTHER ISSUES THAT AFFECT THE PRACTICE OF CLINICAL MICROBIOLOGY

Two committees of the Public and Scientific Affairs Board (PSAB), the Committee on Professional Affairs and the Committee on Laboratory Practices, specifically address issues that affect the professional interests of clinical microbiologists.

**MEDICARE REIMBURSEMENT OF CLINICAL LABORATORY TESTS**

Members of the PSAB Committees on Professional Affairs and Laboratory Practices serve on the College of American Pathology’s Pathology Coding Caucus and participate in an annual public meeting sponsored by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) to determine appropriate coding and reimbursement for new tests to be included on the Medicare Clinical Laboratory Fee Schedule. They are also involved in the CMS National Correct Coding Initiative (NCCI) and are monitoring recommendations from CMS on changes regarding payment or nonpayment for hospital-acquired infections.

**MEDICARE COST SHARING AND COMPETITIVE BIDDING PROPOSALS**

Efforts to oppose Congressional and Federal policy proposals on laboratory test copayments and competitive bidding were successful as a result of the work of the Clinical Laboratory Coalition, of which ASM is a charter member. In addition, when ASM sent alerts to its membership encouraging the use of ASM’s Legislative Communications Site to contact Congress and express opposition to the copayment proposal, ASM members dispatched over 450 email messages to legislators. To date, Congress has not approved any laboratory copayment proposals.
The ASM worked with the Clinical Laboratory Coalition to end a federal demonstration program that would have mandated bidding by clinical laboratories that perform laboratory tests reimbursed under Medicare. A temporary injunction issued by the U.S. Federal District Court in Southern California prevented the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services from moving forward with the demonstration program. Congress approved the Medicare Improvements for Patients and Providers Act of 2008, which repealed the section of the Society Security Act authorizing the Medicare laboratory demonstration program.

**CLINICAL LABORATORY IMPROVEMENT AMENDMENTS** ASM monitors federal regulations that affect microbiology-testing issues. Members and staff regularly attend Clinical Laboratory Improvement Advisory Committee (CLIAC) meetings and interact with CLIAC staff on microbiology issues.

**ASM PLAYS MAJOR ROLE IN QUALITY CONTROL GUIDELINES**

CLIAC staff approached the ASM regarding quality control (QC) testing of commercially available microbiology identification systems required by the Clinical Laboratory Improvement Amendments (CLIA). ASM surveyed member users of commercial microbial identification systems to determine QC failure rates and then presented the data to CLIAC and the Clinical and Laboratory Standards Institute (CLSI) in 2006.

ASM recommended that CLSI – an organization that brings together government, industry and professional society partners to formulate consensus guidelines – develop a guideline to allow for streamlined QC. The CLSI used ASM’s survey data as a basis for its M50-A document, “Quality Control for Commercial Microbial Identification Systems, Approved Guideline.”

Subsequently CMS issued a memorandum to State Survey Agency Directors informing them of its acceptance of the new QC standards published in the CLSI M50-A Guideline. CMS will incorporate the new QC standards into its next revision of the CLIA Interpretive Guidelines for Laboratories and Laboratory Surveyors. The ASM has contacted the College of American Pathologists and the Joint Commission encouraging them to modify their QC standards by accepting the changes outlined by the CMS memorandum to State Survey Agency Directors.
FOOD AND DRUG ADMINISTRATION POLICY
Examples of policy that ASM has monitored and commented on include CLIA waiver of laboratory tests, Analyte Specific Reagents (ASR), and In Vitro Diagnostic Multivariate Index Assays (IVDMIA).

LABORATORY RESPONSE NETWORK AND GUIDELINES
The ASM has been an advocate for its members regarding issues surrounding the Laboratory Response Network (LRN), managed by the CDC and the Association of Public Health Laboratories (APHL). In coordination with the CDC and APHL, ASM developed guidelines to assist “sentinel” clinical microbiology laboratories in recognizing microorganisms that might be agents of bioterrorism. The ASM created a webpage with 12 “Sentinel Level Clinical Microbiology Laboratory Guidelines” including a laboratory readiness plan and a packaging and shipping guideline.

The ASM serves on the LRN Partners Work Group, which meets twice yearly to discuss LRN matters, and on the Laboratory Preparedness Exercise Workgroup, which provides review and consultation on exercises that help prepare laboratories for dealing with potential agents of bioterrorism.

CENTERS FOR DISEASE CONTROL AND PREVENTION MEETINGS
The ASM participates in CDC-organized meetings and represents the interests of clinical microbiologists. Examples include:

- CDC-APHL tuberculosis drug susceptibility-testing meeting
- CDC-APHL meeting on the role of laboratories in enteric disease surveillance and response
- CDC-APHL meeting on pandemic influenza diagnostics for clinical laboratories
- CDC National Laboratory Training Network planning meeting on biosafety and biosecurity in clinical laboratories
- CDC’s Blue Ribbon Panel for clinical laboratory safety issues

PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE COMMITTEE (PPC)
Established in 2011, the PPC is a standing committee of the ASM’s Council Policy Committee (ASM’s Executive Leadership Body). Its mission is to provide professional development opportunities and content to members to increase their skill, enhance their job performance and contribute to the profession. The PPC serves the microbiology profession by representing clinical microbiologists and immunologists, microbiologists working in the pharmaceutical, environmental and food industries, and biological safety officers. Currently, the PPC oversees professional certification, accreditation of postgraduate clinical training programs, the clinical microbiology portal, mentoring for clinical microbiologists and the Speakers Bureau. The PPC also develops evidence-based and consensus-based practice guidelines.
ASM OFFERS CERTIFICATION PROGRAMS THAT ARE VALUABLE COMPONENTS IN MY PROFESSIONAL ADVANCEMENT AND LICENSURE

The American College of Microbiology (ACM) is part of the Professional Practice Committee and serves the professional interests of clinical microbiologists and immunologists. Two primary activities are certification of microbiologists and immunologists and the accreditation of postgraduate training programs.

AMERICAN BOARD OF MEDICAL MICROBIOLOGY (ABMM)

Federal and state governmental agencies recognize ABMM certification as a significant component of licensure requirements to direct high complexity laboratories engaged in the diagnosis of infectious diseases. The CLIA ‘88 final rule recognizes the ABMM as an approved certification board.

AMERICAN BOARD OF MEDICAL LABORATORY IMMUNOLOGY (ABMLI)

Federal and state governmental agencies recognize ABMLI certification as a significant component of licensure requirements to direct high complexity labs engaged in the diagnosis of immunological diseases. The CLIA ‘88 final rule recognizes the ABMLI as an approved certification board.

NATIONAL REGISTRY OF CERTIFIED MICROBIOLOGISTS (NRCM)

The NRCM certifies individuals at the bachelor’s, master’s, and doctoral degree levels in biological safety, food safety and quality, and pharmaceutical and medical device. The NRCM and the American Society for Clinical Pathology (ASCP) conjointly develop and administer certification exams in clinical microbiology at the bench and supervisory levels. For more information, visit http://www.ascp.org/boc.

COMMITTEE ON POSTGRADUATE EDUCATION PROGRAMS (CPEP)

In 1961, CPEP was established to develop standards for training doctoral-level microbiologists, and later immunologists, in clinical microbiology and immunology. There are currently 15 microbiology and 3 immunology programs accredited by CPEP.

The ABMM/ABMLI reception at the General Meeting is a popular networking event for doctoral-level certified microbiologists and immunologists, as well as current trainees in the CPEP-accredited programs.
ASM is accredited by the France Foundation to provide continuing medical education credits, as well as by P.A.C.E.® to provide continuing education credits. ASM is also recognized by the Accreditation Council for Pharmacy Education (ACPE), and the California and Florida Departments of Health as a provider of continuing education credit for physicians (CE), microbiologists, pharmacists (CPE) and clinical laboratory scientists and personnel.

ASM WORKSHOPS
Workshops are held prior to the annual ASM General Meeting and the Interscience Conference on Antimicrobial Agents and Chemotherapy (ICAAC). At least half the workshops at the General Meeting are dedicated to topics in clinical microbiology; an additional 25% are in clinical laboratory management and communications. At ICAAC, workshop topics are divided between management of infectious diseases and laboratory diagnosis of infectious diseases.

WEBINARS AND WEBCASTS
Webinars are live audio and web presentations on clinical microbiology topics. Webcasts are recorded webinars that can be viewed online.

ASM CONTINUING EDUCATION (CE) PORTAL
With ASM’s varied professional development programs, the ASM CE Portal is the Society’s single online source for accessing and tracking all continuing education activities. An annual transcript is maintained for all members who need to manage their continuing education records, and a year-end summary of the information is easily available.
The attendance at the General Meeting for individual sessions developed by Division C exceeds the number of registrants who identify themselves as members of the Division.

The ASM disseminates peer-reviewed scientific findings through its meetings and publications, guided by the ASM Meetings and Publications Boards, respectively.

**ASM GENERAL MEETING**
Clinical microbiology is the largest single group among the 27 scientific disciplines attending the General Meeting. An annual 15% of the total scientific attendance is comprised of primarily Division C members. Elected leaders within the field of clinical microbiology develop invited sessions and morning interactive programs and schedule posters directed at current topics.

**INTERSCIENCE CONFERENCE ON ANTIMICROBIAL AGENTS AND CHEMOTHERAPY (ICAAC)**
ICAAC is the global premier meeting for the infectious disease community, and 20% of the 35-member ICAAC Program Committee are clinical microbiologists. ICAAC participants include physicians, microbiologists, researchers, pharmacists, and healthcare professionals from around the world. Of the total ICAAC attendees, approximately 10% identify themselves as a member of the clinical microbiology scientific specialty.

**EXHIBITS**
An annual Exhibit that provides learning opportunities for meeting attendees is held at the General Meeting and ICAAC. Displays of diagnostic and laboratory equipment and supplies, laboratory services, publications, pharmaceutical and other related companies allow attendees a one-stop experience to view and discuss the latest supporting products and services.
ASM JOURNALS
ASM Journals continue to strive to publish the preeminent research in microbiology. As always, ASM Journals are edited by working scientists actively involved in the research community. A subscription to ASM’s Clinical Package provides full access to seven (7) ASM journals that deliver authoritative, high-quality clinical microbial research:

• Antimicrobial Agents and Chemotherapy
• Clinical Microbiology Reviews
• Clinical and Vaccine Immunology
• Infection and Immunity
• Journal of Clinical Microbiology
• Journal of Virology
• mBio®

ASM remains committed to delivering current, influential coverage of clinical microbiology research.

ASM’S CLINICAL MICROBIOLOGY PUBLICATIONS

ASM Press publishes other important reference works in clinical microbiology and immunology. Of particular note are the Manual of Clinical Microbiology, currently in its ninth edition; the Manual of Molecular and Clinical Laboratory Immunology, seventh edition; the Clinical Microbiology Procedures Handbook, second edition (available in both print and electronic formats); Clinical Laboratory Management; and The Microbiology Bench Companion.

Launched in December 2011, the CM Portal is hosts a variety of information needed for the day-to-day work of diagnostic microbiologists and immunologists. It has content for bench technologists, supervisors, lab directors, students, and fellows, as well as the general public. It is an exciting resource for clinical microbiologists and immunologists and provides the opportunity to learn, network, connect and contribute!

Practical Guidance for Clinical Microbiology (PGCM)
PGCM, formerly Cumitechs, are consensus-based documents about the optimal procedures for a variety of clinical microbiology techniques. PGCM will not be sold as an individual booklet; they will be submitted to an ASM-peer reviewed journal for possible publication.
ASM’s focus on clinical microbiology is demonstrated by the extent to which critical issues are being addressed across the organization.

ASM HELPS ME CONNECT WITH PEERS

QUESTION AND ANSWER (Q & A)

The Clinical Microbiology Portal, http://clinmicro.asm.org, offers a Q & A feature. Members can ask a question that is answered by an expert, typically within three business days and references are frequently cited. Members can also search a database of over 1,500 questions that have already been answered.

Hot Topic Discussion
Every other month, the Clinical Microbiology Portal hosts an online event that features an expert who presents his opinion about a hot topic, current event or controversial issue. The expert’s presentation is 30-minutes and viewers have the opportunity to submit questions for the expert’s response.

Mentoring
The Clinical Microbiology Mentoring Committee promotes the clinical microbiology profession and how those already in the profession can advance in their careers by facilitating mentoring activities.

LISTSERVS

ASM hosts “ClinMicroNet,” a listserv that provides communication for more than 700 ASM members who are doctoral-level clinical microbiology laboratory directors or laboratory managers with national standing and peer recognition. ASM also hosts the “DivCNet” listserv, an email-based discussion group which is open to all ASM clinical microbiologists. This service is intended for individuals who work in, or have an interest in, clinical microbiology laboratories. This forum may be used to discuss any topic related to clinical microbiology, ASM, ASM Division C, or other topics of interest to the membership.

CLINICAL MICROBIOLOGY ISSUES UPDATE

The Office of Public Affairs prepares and electronically distributes a monthly newsletter called the Clinical Microbiology Issues Update. The newsletter provides timely information on a wide variety of issues and topics of interest to clinical microbiologists, including legislative and regulatory policy updates on Medicare reimbursement, CLIA information and meeting summaries, FDA Guidance Documents, LRN issues, antimicrobial resistance testing issues, bioterrorism, and emerging infectious diseases. More than 3,400 ASM members subscribe to this newsletter, which is also archived online.
The service component to the Lab Cap Program has been a rewarding experience for ASM members, including clinical laboratory scientists, researchers, clinicians, and professors.

ASM GIVES ME AN OPPORTUNITY TO SHARE MY EXPERTISE WITH COLLEAGUES IN RESOURCE-CONSTRAINED COUNTRIES

The Committee on Sustainable Development, a standing committee of ASM’s International Board, harnesses the technical skill and knowledge of ASM members to improve global health. Since 2005, ASM has offered clinical microbiologists opportunities to build clinical and public health microbiology through the Global Laboratory Capacity Strengthening (LabCap) and other programs. To accomplish this mission, the committee seeks to accomplish the following goals: 1) provide a program to ensure the quality of clinical microbiology services; 2) engage ASM resources in the delivery of global laboratory capacity strengthening; and 3) contribute to and support the long-term viability of quality microbiology laboratory services globally.

Programs such as LabCap utilize ASM’s vast resources and membership to strengthen laboratory systems in resource-constrained countries. ASM experts have supported system assessment, national strategy and policy development, equipment and supply standardization, training, mentoring, customization and rollout of training packages and programs, quality system optimization, validation of laboratory technologies and procedures, specimen referral networking, and coordination of infectious disease surveillance and outbreak response. They come from a broad variety of clinical microbiology laboratories across the globe, specializing in bacteriology, mycobacteriology, mycology, parasitology, and virology.
ASM recognizes the many contributions and achievements of clinical microbiologists through its Scientific Awards Program. The following is a list of awards that are specifically available for clinical microbiologists:

**ABBOTT AWARD IN CLINICAL AND DIAGNOSTIC IMMUNOLOGY**
Honors a distinguished scientist in the field of clinical or diagnostic immunology.

**BECTON DICKINSON AWARD FOR RESEARCH IN CLINICAL MICROBIOLOGY**
Honors outstanding clinical research accomplishments.

**BIOMÉRIEU SONNENWIRTH AWARD FOR LEADERSHIP IN CLINICAL MICROBIOLOGY**
Honors promotion of innovation in clinical laboratory science and the advancement of clinical microbiology as a profession.

**HARDY DIAGNOSTICS ABMM/ABMLI PROFESSIONAL RECOGNITION AWARD**
Honors outstanding contributions by ABMM or ABMLI Diplomates to the professional recognition of clinical microbiologists and/or immunologists.

**SCHERAGO-RUBIN AWARD**
Recognizes an outstanding bench-level clinical microbiologist.

**SIEMENS HEALTHCARE DIAGNOSTICS YOUNG INVESTIGATOR AWARD**
Recognizes research excellence and potential to further the educational or research objectives of an outstanding young clinical scientist.
WHAT’S NEXT IN ASM’S CLINICAL MICROBIOLOGY ACTIVITIES?

EVIDENCE-BASED PRACTICE GUIDELINES (EBPGs)

The Professional Practice Committee (PPC) is responsible for the development of EBPGs and intends to develop two guidelines each year. The guideline development is a six-step transparent process that focuses on a quality problem with a measurable quality gap. The purpose of EBPGs is to improve health outcomes by developing and disseminating evidence-based information to patients, clinicians, and other decision makers about which interventions are most effective for which patients under specific circumstances.

PUBLIC AFFAIRS

ASM is contributing additional funds towards the next steps in the competitive bidding lawsuit. Amending the complaint will allow the plaintiff laboratories the opportunity to demonstrate to the Court the reasons CMS should be required to return or destroy the bid applications that remain in CMS’ possession.

ASM PRESS

In January 2013, ASM Press will launch Microbiology Spectrum, a collection of reviews spanning the breadth of content acquired by ASM Press. Each bimonthly issue will contain up to 10 reviews: 3–5 that examine a specific topic (e.g., Vibrios, therapeutic antibodies, or petroleum microbiology) from different points of view and 3–5 that each investigate different topics.

Microbiology Spectrum will be available to institutions as at 12-month subscription. Institutions will be invited to begin with a free trial. Individuals without institutional access may purchase 24-hour access to individual reviews.

INTERNATIONAL

Volunteer opportunities; under our Global Laboratory Capacity Strengthening (LabCap) Program, a member-only database has been established to facilitate volunteer contributions.
We will continue to monitor developments in clinical microbiology and work to ensure that the professional and educational needs of clinical microbiologists are met.

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