

May 3, 2023

My name is Kelsey Dodson, I use the pronouns she/her and I am a board-certified phlebotomist and medical laboratory scientist, and member of ASCLS-MN. I am commenting today in support for the Allied Health technician's scholarship fund (HF1340, and SF 1288) which have been given budget in the house but neither the Senate or Governor's proposals.

In 2009 I graduated from the University of Wisconsin Madison with a degree in genetics and anthropology and expecting my first child. It turns out graduating during a financial crisis makes it exceptionally difficult to get hired with a general biology degree, because of this my husband and I did what many of my generation have done, we moved back to his parent's home to save money while I continued my education at the University of Minnesota's MLS (Medical Lab sciences) program. After 4 years at UW Madison, I was relatively lucky to have mostly low interest federal loans (Subsidized and Unsubsidized) thanks in part to scholarships, Pell grants, work study and Stafford loans. All said and done my debt burden at that time was about \$18,500, because job prospects were terrible I decided to defer those loan payments by transferring to the University of MN MLS program where in just over 2 years I accumulated about \$22,000 additional debt because I was considered a Wisconsin resident. In the decade since I have graduated Tuition at University of Minnesota is now \$13,520 per year (MN Resident) and \$32,000 per year (non-resident).

I completely understand why many students are choosing two-year schools with the ability transfer to four-year schools as a way to save money. Cost per credits is just a little bit less. I also understand how programs like the MLS program at the U of M could be passed over by students when choosing programs, because students look at starting wages they can expect after graduation¹. The reality is had I graduated not in 2009, I more than likely would have found a job in a related biotech industry, and earned more money. There are many degree programs that require the exact same amount of time that pay better for approximately the same amount of debt accumulated¹. Targeted scholarships for programs essential to struggling healthcare programs will help attract students to these programs, lowering the upfront costs and student debt.

Enrollment challenges will continue as demographics once again begin to shift, and without programs for students to learn, staffing will always be a concern. This anticipated staffing cliff needs to be looked at from every angle and targeted scholarships for Allied Health Technicians is an important small piece of the wider industry issues.

I thank you for your support and consideration of Allied Health technicians Scholarship fund.

Sincerely,



Kelsey Dodson PBT(ASCP), MLS(ASCP)

¹ Edna Garcia, MPH, Iman Kundu, MPH, Karen Fong, The American Society for Clinical Pathology's 2021 Wage Survey of Medical Laboratories in the United States, *American Journal of Clinical Pathology*, Volume 158, Issue 6, December 2022, Pages 702-722, <https://doi.org/10.1093/ajcp/aqac116>

Table 7Mean Hourly Wage by Occupational Title and Geographical Areas^a

Occupational Title	Mean Hourly Wage	UA	UC	Rural
CG	\$35.13	\$35.27	NA	NA
CT	\$39.84	\$39.75	\$39.92	NA
HT	\$30.30	\$30.85	\$29.20	NA
HTL	\$31.27	\$31.36	\$30.80	NA
LIS	\$37.26	NA	NA	NA
MLA/CLA	\$19.44	\$19.49	\$18.11	NA
MLT/CLT	\$25.00	\$25.50	\$24.58	\$24.04
MLS/MT/CLS	\$33.13	\$33.73	\$31.88	\$31.41
MB	\$31.12	\$31.61	NA	NA
PA	\$47.66	\$51.04	\$48.57	NA
PI/QA	\$44.18	\$44.10	NA	NA
PBT	\$17.63	\$18.22	\$17.21	\$15.82