

Greetings from St. Louis, the site of the 2019 ASCLD Symposium. We have already had some amazing workshops and look forward to the plenary sessions that start tomorrow. The best advice anyone ever gave me related to symposia is to not get overwhelmed in all of the information that will be presented this week. Pick one or two things that you will implement, figure out a way to implement them, and do it well! The proceedings of the symposium will be available in FSI-Synergy, the video will be made available online for members, and the EventMobi app has the presentation materials. I hope you have a fantastic week in St. Louis. In my last message as ASCLD President, I have a full agenda. It is fitting in a way because there is a rapidly accelerating pace in forensic science. This year you will see standards published at a rate you have never seen before, you will see many initiatives started, and forensic science will go to new plateaus of critique and advancement. It is an exciting and exhausting time to be a leader in forensic science. Again, I want to thank you for the opportunity to serve this year and look forward to continuing to contribute to the organization in many ways in the future. I hope to get to see many of you this week. I look forward to renewing friendships and meeting new friends!

[Sexual Assault Kit Survey](#)

We are nearing completion of the ASCLD sexual assault kit survey. We are hoping that the data will be available soon. Thank you for participating in the survey and giving us a better look at where we stand nationally on this issue. This week I emailed some of our collaborators on sexual assault kit issues and received a treasure trove of data from Dr. Julie Valentine. She sent me research that I have asked our webmaster to set up an area on our website to link to it. I hope this area on our website will be much like the opioid resource area. I learned quite a bit as I read the articles, many of which I did not know existed. Dr. Valentine wrote, “some states have completed financial analysis of the cost of rape. I believe the first state to do this analysis was Minnesota. The Utah report, completed by Utah State Health Dept. in 2017, found sexual violence costs each Utah resident \$1,700/year (calculated in 2011).” She also provided an article by Peterson et al. (2017) which is likely the best source on national analysis of costs of sexual violence. This report concludes that the estimated lifetime cost of rape was \$122,461 per victim, or a population economic burden of nearly \$3.1 trillion (2014 U.S. dollars) over victims’ lifetimes, based on data indicating 425 million U.S. adults have been raped. She also included the article many of us are familiar with from Dr. Wein and a colleague at Stanford. That study looked at the financial benefit of testing sexual assault kits. I hope you will find these resources as helpful as I did when preparing to discuss these issues with your policy makers.

[2017-2018 FORESIGHT Report Published](#)

The benchmark report for FORESIGHT has been released by Dr. Speaker. We posted it for your convenience, but it can also be obtained from the Project FORESIGHT website. If you are attending the ASCLD Symposium, be sure to include the FORESIGHT meeting in your personal agenda. This meeting will help you understand the report and what you can gain by being a FORESIGHT participating lab. This has been a big initiative for ASCLD and we are excited to see this data being used in a number of initiatives and in many publications. Also, be sure to attend the awards ceremony to see if your laboratory is a Maximus winner.

[Law Enforcement Mental Health and Wellness Act Report to Congress March 2019](#)

The recommendation noted below is from the March 2019 Report to Congress, re: Recommendation 21: Encourage departments to make support available to nonsworn employees on the same terms as their sworn colleagues whenever possible. The civilian staff most often mentioned as warranting enhanced services were dispatch, forensic, and crime scene investigation staff. It was argued that they engage in the same incidents that cause stress for officers, just in a different capacity.... Simply making wellness programs available to these civilian staff members may benefit their personal wellness as well as overall agency operational readiness. <https://ric-zai-inc.com/Publications/cops-p370-pub.pdf> We look forward to more funding opportunities in this area coming soon.

BJA Partnerships to Support Data-driven Responses to Emerging Drug Threats

These demonstration projects are designed to build capacity, foster cross-sector collaboration, and support innovation. Under this solicitation, up to six communities will be selected for grant awards up to \$600,000, each for a 24-month period.

Note under “Implementation Phase—Data Collection and Analysis” section: Applicants may use funds to develop or enhance real-time data collection or data analysis. Examples of activities that could be considered can be found below. This list is intended to be illustrative of site level interventions but not comprehensive. Establish an overdose fatality review team or enhance an existing overdose fatality review team. Local overdose fatality review teams have been used throughout the United States to examine the circumstances surrounding unintentional fatal drug overdoses providing additional context to the shared aggregate data. These reviews are used to identify missed opportunities for prevention and gaps in local service deliveries in order to identify and inform strategies and coordination needed to prevent future overdoses. Conduct rapid assessment to quickly gather data in response to a question or crisis requiring timely intervention, such as a spike in overdoses. Assessments may include semi-structured interviews with service providers working with people who use drugs, public safety officials, treatment providers, emergency department staff members, and other stakeholders in targeted geographic areas. Conduct testing of drug paraphernalia such as syringes or glassine bags that are collected from syringe exchange programs or from public areas, where the syringe users are anonymous. Collaborate with medical examiners or coroners to expedite access to preliminary data on suspected overdose deaths prior to forensic toxicology data. Some communities have found that suspected counts of opioid overdose deaths may be obtained earlier because of the distinctive clinical and scene characteristics of opioid overdoses. Expedite toxicology analysis and utilize screening kits and new technology for potential novel or counterfeit drugs. Administer voluntary, anonymous interviews to and collect urine specimens from arrestees in a booking facility or jail on a monthly or quarterly basis to assess the dimension of the local substance abuse problem.

OSAC Open Comment Period on Interdisciplinary Training Standard

The Organization of Scientific Area Committees for Forensic Science (OSAC) opens the thirty-day comment period for [ASTM E2917-19: Standard Practice for Forensic Science Practitioner Training, Continuing Education, and Professional Development Programs](#). A multidisciplinary team within OSAC drafted this cross-cutting document and introduced it as a draft standard to [ASTM International](#) where over the course of a year it progressed through ASTM’s formal consensus process and was published as a standard in February 2019. OSAC is now seeking feedback on whether this standard should be placed on the OSAC Registry which is OSAC’s formal acknowledgement that the content is technically sound and should be adopted by the forensic science community. The intent of the open comment period is to

collect feedback on inclusion of the standard on the [OSAC Registry](#) (OSAC is not soliciting potential revisions to the documents themselves.) Comments should be specific as to why the document should or should not be placed on the OSAC Registry.

Please review the [standard](#) and provide [comments](#) by 11:59 PM EST on June 1, 2019.

LEAP Collaborators Wanted:

James DeFrancesco, PhD at Loyola University Chicago is interested in finding a laboratory collaborator for his research in chemistry, toxicology, and method validation. If you are interested, please contact him at 773-508-3283 or jdefrancesco@luc.edu If you are seeking a collaboration partner and would like your info to be sent out similar to this - please email: FRC@ascl.org If you are interested in signing-up for LEAP - please see: <https://www.ascl.org/forensic-research-committee/>