Meet the Laboratorian – Gregory Post, Ph.D.

Compiled by Josh Rowland, State Training Coordinator, NPHL

What got you interested in pursuing a career in clinical laboratory medicine?

My interests have always revolved around science and I gravitated towards biochemistry. In my second year of graduate school, a visiting clinical chemist gave a lecture on pheochromocytoma, which is an adenoma of the adrenal gland that causes hypertension. I knew from that moment that Clinical Chemistry was where my career path was going to follow. Clinical Chemistry applied everything I found to be of interest with the application toward living systems.

Where did you receive your formal training?

I received a BA in chemistry/biology from Jamestown College (Jamestown, ND) and Ph.D. from North Dakota State University located in Fargo ND. I was fortunate to be selected for the post-doctoral program in Clinical Chemistry at the Mayo Graduate School of Medicine in Rochester, MN where I spent two years of training. The first year was primarily classroom and hands on experience in each area of laboratory medicine, while the second year was research in a particular area. My research project was in the area of therapeutic drug monitoring/toxicology where I developed assays for immunosuppressant drugs and pesticides/insecticides.

How long have you worked in the clinical laboratory field?

In 1986, my first job was in Lincoln, NE and have worked here ever since. My initial plans were to stay a few years and get some experience, however, something about Nebraska gets into your system which makes it hard to leave.

Are there specific areas of clinical laboratory medicine in which you have special interest or expertise?

I am Board Certified in both Clinical Chemistry and Toxicology. Since there are limited numbers of clinical chemists in these areas, I had to develop a general knowledge in most every area. My interests have varied over time with requirements of the job, but forensic toxicology currently has a strong interest for me. I also enjoy research and development in the areas of nutritional assessment and newborn screening. My latest venture is in the area of molecular diagnostics, which has endless possibilities in applications to laboratory medicine.

What do you see as the greatest future challenges for clinical laboratories?

The workforce in the laboratory is aging and not enough young people choose clinical laboratory science as a career path. Thus, attracting and retaining qualified individuals is one of the bigger challenges for the laboratory today. Another area where challenges exist is in the delivery of results. Electronic medical records are the way of the future and laboratories must position themselves to have the tools and the right people in place to accomplish these tasks necessary in today's environment.

What is the greatest challenge you face in your job today?

Trying to keep up with the incredible amount of new information. The development of new technology and tests is accelerating which allows many tests traditionally considered reference tests to be brought in-house.

What advice would you give to a first year medical technologist?

Find an area of interest and develop your knowledge base in the area. Do not be afraid to ask questions and never think your education is complete. Embrace change because that is the nature of the job market today.

What do you think is the single biggest change in the laboratory since you started?

Automation in the laboratory and the positive and negative impact this change has had on personnel.

What do you think will be the biggest change in the laboratory over the next ten years?

Embracing new technologies and developing new skill sets in order to provide testing deemed critical in the medical decision process. Since tests performed by the clinical laboratory in the past are now done in physicians' offices, laboratorians must adapt and provide services that are perceived as beneficial to our clientele.

What do you like most about your job?

What I like most about my job is the people I work with and the fact that every day brings on a new challenge.