

National Medical Laboratory Professionals Week

Douglas County Hospital Laboratory (DCHL) is celebrating National Medical Laboratory Professionals Week April 18-24, 2010. This year's theme is "Laboratory Professionals Get Results." Laboratorians often work behind the scenes and many people may not know much about the critical testing performed in labs every day. This week, which is celebrated annually during the last full week of April, offers a chance to find out more about clinical laboratories.

Did you know?

- Approximately 70-80% of all physician decisions are based on laboratory test results.
- More than 10 billion lab tests are performed in the United States each year. DCHL performs 200,000 tests annually.
- DCHL employs 45 laboratory professionals, pathologists and support staff with over 800 years of combined experience!
- Laboratory professionals job titles and what they do:
 - *Customer service, office and transcription staff* process orders, specimens and reports for all laboratory departments.
 - *Phlebotomists* collect blood specimens.
 - *Medical Laboratory Technicians/Scientists* analyze blood and body fluid specimens using state of the art instrumentation and methodology. They measure blood analytes such as glucose, HDL/LDL cholesterol, triglycerides; test blood for safe transfusion; analyze blood cells for abnormalities and culture specimens for harmful bacteria, fungus and viral agents.
 - *Cytotechnologists* analyze PAP smears and tissue for abnormal or cancerous cells.
 - *Histotechnicians/Histotechnologists* prepare tissues collected during a biopsy or surgery for examination. They use special stains to detect abnormal or cancerous cells.
 - *Pathologists* review microscopic slides of cells and tissues to diagnose disease. They consult with patients' physicians when requested.
- DCHL serves as a reference laboratory and provides technical consultation for hospitals and clinics in surrounding communities.
- The DCHL lab is accredited by Healthcare Facilities Accreditation Program of the American Osteopathic Association. On their recent inspection, the survey team declared this lab was one of the best laboratories they had surveyed.
- Demand for medical laboratory testing is increasing due to:
 - As Americans age, more testing is required more frequently
 - Strong emphasis on preventative medicine, including early detection and patient responsibility
 - Expanding technological developments such as increased numbers of organ transplants.
 - Tests are needed for new and different pathogens (germs that cause disease).
 - Increases in international travel and immigration.

