

## **Medical Laboratory Technologists a U.S. News & World Report “Best Career” for 2011**

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Medical technologists (MT) and clinical laboratory scientists (CLS) were declared among “The 50 Best Careers of 2011” by U.S. News & World Report (USNWR) in its annual survey of high-demand careers. Editors at the respected news magazine declared “clinical lab technicians and technologists” to be the “unsung heroes of the healthcare industry.”

. . . “Job growth is expected to be faster than average, with the number of clinical lab workers rising about 16% between 2008 and 2018, adding about 25,000 jobs, according to the Labor Department.

. . . With its selection of MTs and CLSs as “Best Careers for 2011,” *U.S. News & World Report* is signaling that demand for proficient clinical laboratory professionals will remain strong in coming years. That means that hiring practices at clinical laboratories must evolve as well.

. . . The analysis was based on the U.S. Labor Department’s latest job growth projections for 2008 to 2018. It highlights occupations that are expected to add jobs above the anticipated 10% average growth rate over the next decade and which will also provide a better-than-average median income.

Medical technologist (MT), clinical laboratory scientist (CLS), and medical laboratory technician (MLT) jobs are expected to rise 16%. The fastest job growth will come from clinical laboratories, pathology laboratories, and physician office laboratories (POLs).

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### **Closure of clinical lab sciences programs threatens healthcare industry**

The current vacancy rate in the clinical laboratory sciences field is 13 percent, said Dianne Cearlock, CEO of NAACLS. In the next five years, 13 percent of the workforce is expected to retire, with 25 percent of the workforce retiring over the next 10 years.

The situation is compounded by the facts that only two new clinical lab professionals enter the field for every seven who retire, and the average age of the laboratory professional is over 50, Cearlock said.

. . . Caskey noted that the increase in program closures means laboratories will be forced to cut services, hire agency people, which is “exceedingly more expensive,” or have current staff work overtime. With increased overtime, “you get concerned about fatigue levels and the potential increase in error rate,” she said.