



“My name is Constantine. I’m a Chicago-native who went to college at Loyola University and studied Molecular Biology, Bioethics, and Political Science. Immediately afterward, I went to graduate school at Rush University to study Medical

Laboratory Science (MLS). I had worked in laboratories as ancillary or support staff during college, but became an ASCP BOC board-certified MLS after my time at Rush. After working in the lab for almost ten years, with increasing responsibility and recognition in our field, I made the transition to medicine.

I graduated medical school and contributed to Zika diagnostics and public health research, all while writing for ASCP’s Lablogatory (blog for medical laboratory professionals) for 5 years. I returned home to Chicago for a residency in anatomic/clinical pathology at Loyola Medicine. Along with my residency work, I maintain strong ties to the medical laboratory community by guest lecturing in MLS classes, continuing to be an advocate for laboratory professionals, speaking on topics that spotlight the invaluable connection between diagnostic work and medicine, as well as seeking opportunities to collaborate and advance both the profession and my career. I sit on three ASCP committees (Commission for Continuing Professional Development, Patient Champions, and Social Media) and hold positions on committees with the CAP, the AABB, the Illinois Society of Pathologists, and the Auxillary Board of the American Red Cross in Chicago.”

### What did receiving the BOC Lab Hero Award mean to you?

“Being recognized by the BOC and the medical laboratory community is invaluable and represents a significant connection to me. Without my experience and foundational training in MLS professionalism and practice, my medical career would look very different. For me, receiving this award is an honor that highlights the value of dedication to one’s profession, one’s professional societies, and communities at large. I continue to serve and thrive within the communities of laboratory medicine and aspire for future fellowships and further rewarding careers. With this award, I hope to galvanize this time in my training and experience, and use it to continue to find new ways to serve the profession that has always provided me with education, collegiality, enthusiasm, and aspiration. I am truly honored.”

### How did your friends, family colleagues, etc., react to the news that you had received a 2021 BOC Lab Hero Award?

“I have to say here how surprised I was to have received so much recognition from way outside the MLS and pathology communities for this award. This speaks to the increasing reach of work being done at ASCP to broadcast, and celebrate, our immense contributions to the medical field. Beyond my professional friends and colleagues recognizing this great honor, I was approached by friends, family, and more who saw my shares and posts on social media with their own accolades and congratulations! Of any of my professional achievements thus far, this was met with great enthusiasm and excitement—this includes several of my alma maters, who reached out to me in hopes of sharing with current students! ”



## Everyone gets BOC certification for a different reason, but what is your story?

"I was adamant about a career in laboratory medicine throughout graduate school. Once I found myself starting out at the bench, I had already made plans to sit for my exam and become certified, both so I could secure a consistent professional trajectory, but also to make sure that I was qualified and credentialed to handle any future opportunity that came my way. Furthermore, I discovered after a few years of work that this was an integral part of my professional identity. I am a physician now, but I still maintain that I am a medical laboratory scientist and have been for years. I still keep this certification maintained! It gives me a reference point in my professional endeavors and provides me with a place to remember all the content and concepts that I use today. BOC certification was the first, foundational step among many that catapulted my career to the place it is today and to the places I hope to go in the future."

## Why did you choose the American Red Cross as your BOC Lab Hero charity?

"I chose to have my charitable donation sent to the American Red Cross. As a current auxiliary board member of their local, greater Chicagoland region, I see firsthand the amazing work this organization of volunteers can do. The past few years have seen an incredible increase of record-breaking natural disasters worldwide. Add the current global pandemic to this and you can imagine how any support to this organization is worth considering. For us in laboratory medicine, the connection is two-fold. The recovery efforts for disaster-torn regions always include follow up care where compassionate diagnostic testing is needed. Second, the nation faces one of the most severe blood shortages to date. Transfusion medicine services rely on both the donations of blood/product donors and the supply chains of organizations like the Red Cross. I'm proud to contribute to these humanitarian efforts abroad and at home."

## What message would you like to send to all of the medical laboratory professionals around the world this Lab Week? What makes you hopeful?

"Make no mistake: for those of us in healthcare, the last few years were an absolutely impactful lesson in the amazing capabilities and frustrating shortcomings of our national healthcare system. COVID-19 has taken our dedication and talent as far as possible and created a new conversation concerned with the deep value of our contributions to patient care. No one has been highlighted better as the workforce behind creating, validating, sustaining, and delivering high-quality, reliable testing nationwide [than the] medical laboratory science community. The profession that is too often "behind the scenes" is now an integral part of the conversation as the backbone of diagnostic medicine. I always remind people of the message that behind every test or biopsy is a living, breathing patient waiting for their results, that three-fourths of diagnostic data comes from laboratory medicine, and virtually all cancer diagnosis come from us!

This Lab Week don't forget that we've always been absolutely critical to the delivery and quality of diagnostic medicine. If the pandemic did anything, it underscored our unwavering commitment, brilliant talents, and deep value to the story of patient care. Without the medical laboratory community, this simply wouldn't be possible."