



Shellene C. Sawyer is a Lieutenant in the United States Air Force. She currently serves as Chief, Specialty Services and Quality Assurance. In this position, she leads a diverse team consisting of 16 active duty and 6 civilian personnel who

are responsible for ensuring transfusion, microbiology, and quality assurance services of 9,000 active duty and civilian personnel across four operational wings and major associate units. These specialized medical laboratory departments judiciously accomplish patient testing to provide support to the medical treatment facility and deliver safe and reliable healthcare.

Shellene Sawyer began her military career in 2004 as a Medical Laboratory Technician. She served four years on active duty and then transitioned to the Air Force Reserve. In 2010, she joined the Air National Guard and remained there until she re-enlisted on active duty in the Air Force in 2018. She received a direct commission as a Second Lieutenant in July 2019. She graduated from Trident University in 2014 where she received her Bachelor of Science Degree in Medical Laboratory Science and then her Master of Science Degree in Environmental and Occupational Health Administration in 2020. During her time as a civilian laboratory professional, 2008-2018, she gained a plethora of experience working in various large hospitals, the American Red Cross, and Lab Corp.

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

“Receiving the BOC Lab Hero Award was such an unexpected surprise; I am very honored. It meant a lot to have someone personally nominate me. I work to serve others by teaching and mentoring, so being nominated by someone I mentored is the best gift. Going about our day-to-day lives, we sometimes forget the impact we have on others.”

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

“Once the word got out that I had received a 2021 BOC Lab Hero Award, the team was very excited. They posted my lab hero picture all around the lab and spread the news to as many folks as they could. My family was very excited to hear about this achievement, knowing how much I am passionate and invested in medical laboratory science.”

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

“The Air Force chose the lab for me in 2004. However, after working in the laboratory field, I immediately loved laboratory science. I knew I wanted to continue my education in laboratory medicine, so I first took the MLT(ASCP) exam and eventually the MLS(ASCP) exam. I chose BOC certification because it is the gold standard in certification. BOC represents finding the opportunity in change and helps individuals understand the importance of change in our career by keeping members updated on the latest and greatest in laboratory medicine and offering a variety of professional certifications.”

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

“I chose the American Red Cross (ARC) as my charity because I believe in their mission of preventing and alleviating human suffering in the face of emergencies by mobilizing the power of volunteers and the generosity of donors. During this unprecedented time, we have seen a direct impact on the availability of blood and, at times, it has been extremely challenging to stock our blood product inventory.

Thankfully, we have the ARC always promoting the need for blood in the community. Their outreach to the community allows for collection of blood products that save lives every day. The ARC and the generosity of volunteer blood product donors allows us to continue to do so; we truly need one another!”



# LAB WEEK LAB HERO

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

“What makes me hopeful is seeing firsthand what the laboratory community can do when faced with such an unprecedented event as the COVID-19 Pandemic. As a laboratory family, we have come together and delivered to the community the best COVID-19 testing response we could. We were quick to respond to the call and continued to evolve our testing methods and capabilities throughout the last two years.

That is what we do as laboratory professionals; we embrace change because we understand the importance of providing our patients with the best test results. For all my fellow medical laboratory professionals around the world I would say thank you! You are the often times hidden heroes who have a direct impact on saving lives every day and I am proud to share the title medical laboratory professional with you all!”