



# IFBLS

International Federation of  
Biomedical Laboratory Science

## IFBLS Position Paper on Patient Safety

The World Health Organization identified patient safety as a global health priority in 2002.<sup>1</sup> This goal was reaffirmed in 2019, with detailed recommendations for global action to improve patient safety.<sup>2</sup>

The foundation of patient safety is 'First do no harm'. Improving patient safety requires preventing and reducing errors, and constantly mitigating and avoiding unsafe acts. Patient safety requires that health care delivery is safe, effective, patient-centered, timely, efficient and equitable.<sup>3</sup> Safe healthcare delivery requires all healthcare professionals to assure quality processes and use evidence in their practice, continuously improve processes, incorporate current information technology, work in interprofessional teams to deliver patient (person)-centered care.<sup>4</sup>

IFBLS recommends that the education and training of Biomedical Laboratory Scientists comprises both tertiary education and a minimum supervised clinical laboratory experience to achieve the required standard of practice in order to carry out the following key aspects of their role; to promote safe, effective, efficient, timely, patient-centered and equitable clinical laboratory services to support diagnosis, treatment and health care for patients.

### It is the position of IFBLS that:

**Biomedical Laboratory Scientists are responsible for ensuring the safety of each step of the laboratory testing process by:**

- Adhering to current high standards of practice and the application of quality assured protocols and governance;
- Focusing upon preventing errors in the entire laboratory testing process;
- Ensuring that laboratories conform with national and international standards of accreditation;
- Maintaining high standards for qualifications and continuing professional development;
- Including patient safety concepts and competencies into academic and continuing professional development requirements for Biomedical Laboratory Scientists;
- Improving laboratory testing services applying continuous quality improvement principles.

**Biomedical Laboratory Scientists are responsible for the effectiveness of laboratory testing by:**

- Incorporating current scientific evidence of appropriate use of laboratory testing;
- Ensuring optimal use of laboratory testing services as an aide to diagnosis, and monitoring treatment of disease.
- Improving appropriate utilization of existing and new technology to optimize the benefits of laboratory investigations.

*The 'Key to the Cure' since 1954*

**Biomedical Laboratory Scientists are responsible for improving the efficiency of laboratory testing in all settings by:**

- Using cost effective methods for all processes without compromising standards;
- Eliminating defects in the total laboratory testing process through audit and quality assurance.
- Improving workforce productivity with technology, informatics and continuous review and evaluation of processes.

**Biomedical Laboratory Scientists are responsible for ensuring the timeliness of laboratory testing in all settings by:**

- Employing analytical test methods that use optimal procedures and technology.
- Using new technology and informatics to optimize delivery of laboratory results and interpretative information to ensure maximum benefit to the patient.

**Biomedical Laboratory Scientists are responsible for equity in the delivery of laboratory testing services by:**

- Ensuring access to laboratory testing services for all individuals based on clinical need;
- Evaluating access to laboratory services with a monitoring system.

**Biomedical Laboratory Scientists are responsible for providing laboratory testing services that are patient-centered by:**

- Maintaining patient confidentiality throughout all phases of laboratory testing;
- Providing patients with information about laboratory testing prior to specimen collection in order to give informed consent;
- Providing test results and interpretation to inform the diagnosis;
- Focusing on improving patient outcomes using new technologies, such as personalized medicine by contributing our professional expertise.

#### **References:**

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3. Committee on Quality of Health Care in America. Institute of Medicine. Crossing the quality chasm: a new health system for the 21st century. Washington, DC: National Academies Press; 2001.
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