

The Evaluation of a Pandemic:

How Laboratory Medicine became the central medical specialty for managing the COVID-19 Pandemic

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The COVID-19 pandemic changed the world's perception of what it means to be prepared. This was especially prevalent in healthcare, with the immediate need for high-quality, high-performing laboratories in the matter of weeks. Through the lens of the American Society for Clinical Pathology (ASCP), this presentation outlines the obstacles and successes laboratories faced during the largest public health crisis in modern history, as well as the crucial role ASCP played in vaccination advocacy and policy recommendations. Growing concerns of workforce shortage and burnout rapidly emerged during this time and continue to linger, creating an ongoing challenge to retain and recruit professionals into this essential field. ASCP brings to the forefront examples of how the medical community must evolve to meet the needs of the laboratories and their members, with a key component of this strategy being the optimization of resources already available to laboratories for continuous improvement. The COVID-19 pandemic acted as a catalyst for necessary recognition of pathology and laboratory medicine and ignited the developing conversation of what future holds for the field.