

Venue: PYRAMID 1  
23rd August 2007  
1215-1415 hr

**Lunch Symposium 2: Strategic planning and budgeting for pathology laboratories** (*Sponsored by University of Stellenbosch, National Health Laboratories, Association of Clinical Biochemists of South Africa and the College of Medicine of South Africa*)

**LS2-1. Strategic planning for a pathology laboratory**

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A laboratory's business plan is an integral part of its strategy formulation. The strategic plan is a reflection of the organizations' vision of its future. It is a process that directs an organizations' attention to the future, thereby enabling it to adapt more readily to change and to determine the direction in which it chooses to move. Strategic planning involves a process in which a thorough analysis of all internal and external factors that can affect laboratory performance are analyzed. It involves the identification of strengths and weaknesses as well as identifying competition and market forces. This talk will focus on the key processes involved in the development of a strategic plan for a clinical laboratory.

**LS2-2. Budgets and the budgeting process: What the pathologists need to know**

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It is important that laboratory managers and pathologists understand the importance of budgets and record keeping. Capital expenditure is enhanced by the degree to which the laboratory manager reviews and stays within budget expenses. A budget is an operating and financial plan, which outlines the laboratories objectives and steps taken to achieve them. It is an ongoing process of planning that enables the laboratory manager to visualize projected expenses revenues and cash flow. This talk will outline the definition of a budget and describe the types of budget available. It will also describe the budgeting process, including the preparation and implementation of a budget.

**LS2-3. Assessing productivity and efficiency in the clinical laboratory: Understanding the basic tools**

Writes R

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Economic constraints require that a compromise be reached between individual welfare and limited societal resources. Public pressure and changing health care needs have precipitated both subtle and radical changes in laboratory operations worldwide. Since the late 80's there has been a general worldwide trend to "commercialise" the laboratory, thereby transforming the hospital laboratory into a cost centre enabling more effective use of allocated resources. It is therefore imperative that laboratory

managers ensure that their laboratories are operating at the highest productivity level. The old adage goes: "If one cannot measure something, one cannot improve it". This session will introduce the concept and importance of productivity measurement to laboratory managers. Efficiency and effectiveness, which are closely related to productivity will also be covered. There are various "tools" at the disposal of the laboratory manager to measure productivity, efficiency, and effectiveness. General points on deciding which tool is suitable for each unique laboratory as well as the possible applications and limitations when using these tools will also be discussed.

#### **LS2-4. Resolving conflict in the pathology laboratory**

Schneider JW

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Efficient conflict management in the workplace is an important, demanding and often complex challenge in the daily routine of pathology laboratories. Conflict can potentially undermine trust, reduce productivity, and escalate in intensity with subsequent negative influence on the efficiency and well being of staff and the desirable standard of laboratory practice. However, positive and constructive management of conflict can strengthen relationships, improve confidence and trust amongst staff members, and lead to innovative solutions to overcome problems. Conflict management involves the application of various strategies to facilitate resolution or to contain conflict in such a way that the destructive spiral of dispute can be stopped. Most conflict scenarios in the laboratory can be classified as either conflict with peers, with people supervised, or with authority figures. Guidelines exist to manage conflict in the respective categories. Five models (Thomas and Kilman) can be applied to resolve conflict: competition; avoidance; compromise; accommodation; and collaboration. The most appropriate approach to a particular conflict scenario will depend on the expertise and skills of the manager and the particular circumstances of the conflict scenario. The process to resolve conflict begins with an analysis of the particular conflict scenario and must be based on listening to the involved parties, the acquisition of accurate facts and information, and the exertion of authority and compassion. Training of staff and continuous development of skills to apply the tactics of conflict management are essential to foster constructive relationships and collaboration among laboratory staff. Laboratory managers must lead by example and continuously practice and develop the skills to prevent conflict, to communicate effectively, and to manage anger. Expert assistance or guidance must be obtained if required. Efficient conflict management is an acquired skill that can be learned, developed and refined to facilitate harmony and positive interpersonal relationships in the laboratory environment.