

# **Strategic and professional operational aims of the Hungarian Society of Laboratory Medicine (MLDT) (2018-2020)**

The Hungarian Society of Laboratory Medicine is a scientific-professional organization committed to the following tasks:

*-to facilitate the scientific and professional activities of its members in various fields of laboratory medicine*

*-to facilitate the improvement of the professional skills of its members, to enhance their creative work*

*-to foster various nationwide social, ethical, scientific and educational tasks within the society's field of interest*

*-to endorse professional, ethical and material interests of its members, in accordance with public interest*

Based on the above principles we aim to set the following strategic goals of MLDT for the next 3 years:

## **1. MLDT and the organization of laboratory diagnostic work**

### ***1.1 Creating a national map of laboratories***

As a result of the Strategic Plan during my past term as MLDT President (2009-2011), a nationwide registry of laboratory tests has been developed, providing data on the availability of all specialized laboratory tests: *Kappelmayer J, Antal C, Bereczky Z. Accessibility of special clinical laboratory tests in Hungary. Orvosi Hetilap 2011;152(51):2056-2062.* This database was updated in September 2016. In order to further improve the attainability of laboratory investigations, in the present presidential term we plan to create a nationwide map of laboratories, which would display all laboratories, including their level of progression, general information on working hours (daytime laboratory or duty tasks), head of laboratory, etc. We plan to construct an online questionnaire for all national diagnostic laboratories in order to gain the required information.

Scheduled deadline: December 2019

### ***1.2. Creating a database required for accreditation of laboratories***

The online questionnaire (see above) will provide other aims: together with the Advisory Board of the Hungarian Accreditation Office and the Accreditation Committee of the MLDT it will provide a detailed survey including all laboratories of progression levels (levels II. and III.) that will clarify what is needed for the organization of laboratory accreditation.

Scheduled deadline: December 2018.

### ***1.3. Providing a uniform format of laboratory findings***

Based on literature search and questioning Hungarian laboratory professionals working in several European diagnostic laboratories, we will assess the homogeneity of the format of laboratory reports in Europe. In order to provide uniform formats in Hungary, we will to harmonize the format of the laboratory reports of national labs with that of leading Western-European laboratories. In order to fulfill this aim we will analyze via personal relations the format of laboratory findings in the following European countries: Austria, Belgium, Finland, Germany, and Sweden.

Scheduled deadline: June 2019.

### ***1.4. Quality control of interpretative commenting in the laboratory***

The Extra-analytical Working Group of the MLDT has most recently prepared a valuable and useful document on the quality assessment of preanalytical processes. By involving the Experts of this Working Group we will create quality control assessment for an important part of the post-analytical phase: interpretative commenting. It is indispensable in several areas of laboratory medicine to provide a textual professional laboratory opinion, moreover, in case of some laboratory diagnostic evaluations the exact numeric values must not be provided and the treating physician will be informed on the diagnosis by an interpretative description only.

Scheduled deadline: June 2020.

### ***1.5. Specifying obligations to serve with respect to special laboratory tests***

A growing problem in our country is that some diagnostic tests requiring advanced professional knowledge and highly complex instrumentation (specific hematology or immunology investigations, dynamic endocrine tests, flow cytometry, cytogenetics,

FISH, etc.) cannot be performed due to the fact the laboratories of higher levels would not perform them due to their limits in financing. Based on the fact that most national laboratories for outpatients work over their limits of ideal financing by approximately 4 times, this attitude is regrettable but nevertheless understandable. By the involvement of the leading bodies of health politics in Hungary (Secretariat of State) we would like to achieve clear relations with respect to obligations to serve for the laboratories.

Scheduled deadline: June 2019.

## **2. Scientific-professional work of MLDT**

### ***2.1. Communication with the lay public***

Residents of our country obtain information on the results of laboratory findings mostly via internet databases. Regarding this topic, in Hungary today, by any browsers, the first page found will be [www.laborlelet.hu](http://www.laborlelet.hu), which is a web page with outstanding visitor numbers exceeding visitor numbers of similar websites of other, much larger countries. Even more important is the fact that the number of readers' questions has increased by several fold since the release of the new web page format at the end of 2017. For the MLDT period of 2018-20, together with the "Labtestonline Working Group", the Society intends to set up a permanent team of 10-15 professionals in order to meet this growing demand for public consultation with professional responses and short response times.

Scheduled deadline: June 2018.

### ***2.2. Communication with laboratory professionals***

The website of the MLDT has been completely renewed in recent years, and today it has become one of the most well-edited scientific society websites in the country. For many years, MLDT has been among those 8-10 European countries who have a common professional-scientific laboratory journal that is Clinical Chemistry and Laboratory Medicine (CCLM). This highly acclaimed international journal (impact factor: 3.4) has been publishing the MLDT congress abstracts for years, and the contents of this journal are available for all MLDT members via their own password on the MLDT website. The other English journal is the quarterly published eJIFCC, its publications are also freely downloadable from the MLDT website. During the

period of 2018-2020, we wish to encourage more and more colleagues to become authors of these scientific journals, for which we have high hopes as in previous years many papers have been published in these journals predominantly from Laboratory Medicine Institutes of Pécs, Budapest and Debrecen. At the same time, we wish to support the publication of scientific papers written in Hungarian for the journal of *Orvosi Hetilap*, which is a journal that has been regularly published and commonly read for 160 years and is today an internationally acknowledged scientific journal based on its scientometric parameters.

Scheduled timeline: continuous

### ***2.3. Reviewing protocols and guidelines***

Structural problems in the national healthcare system and social factors often overcome reasonable diagnostic algorithms, so it is necessary to review the level of compliance in the case of the 5 guidelines and 3 protocols of MLDT. Until this data is not available, elaboration of new laboratory protocols cannot be recommended. The MLDT and the Medical Laboratory Steering Committee, via their experts, are constantly involved in the review of protocols written by clinical professions/physicians. Based on this work of recent years, many outdated laboratory aspects have been eliminated from these clinical protocols.

Scheduled deadline: December 2019.

### ***2.4. Cooperation with MOLSZE***

The Hungarian Medical Laboratory Technologists' Association (MOLSZE) is a professional organization of Hungarian medical diagnostics specialists, which plays an important part in the post-gradual training of lab technicians and other laboratory professionals. The MLDT has continuously assisted MOLSZE's work in recent years. In the next 3-year period, we would like to support it professionally by helping to create an appropriate website. Today, MLDT and MOLSZE websites are significantly different regarding their possibilities and information content. The executive board of MLDT and MOLSZE will jointly develop the MOLSZE's new website and define its new image.

Scheduled deadline: December 2018

### ***2.5. Cooperation with the Hungarian Society of Pathology***

A strategic goal of the MLDT is to build a closer professional relationship with the Hungarian Society of Pathology during the period of 2018-2020. A foundation for such close relationship between the two professions is provided by the fact that the university courses of pathology and laboratory diagnostics (clinical biochemistry, clinical chemistry) are scheduled in the same preclinical year of medical school education at most universities.

Scheduled timeline: continuous

### ***2.6 Cooperation with the Hungarian Society of Infective Diseases and Clinical Microbiology***

We wish to achieve that the development of specific laboratory protocols on topics such as sampling, sample transport and sample handling, traceability of measurements, validation of methods, criteria for eligibility of internal and external quality controls, etc. would be elaborated jointly with the microbiologists.

Scheduled timeline: continuous

### ***2.7 Action Plan on the field of Molecular Diagnostics***

Molecular diagnostics is the competence of four professional subcommittees, in addition to the laboratory profession: the College of Pathology, the College of Genetics and the College of Medical Microbiology.

During my earlier MLDT presidential period it was our aim that only such diagnostic unit should carry out molecular diagnostics where a colleague works with the relevant secondary qualification (molecular genetics diagnostics). With the help of the questionnaire described above and with the two above-mentioned in vitro diagnostic scientific societies we would like to assess the level at which this condition is met. We would also like to define the criteria for internal and external quality assurance required for molecular diagnostic tests.

Scheduled deadline: June 2019

### ***2.8 Cooperation with the Diagnostic Industry***

Diagnostic companies have been prominent partners of MLDT over the past decades. This partnership provided not only financial support but in many cases outstanding professional assistance and training opportunities. During the period of 2018-2020 of

MLDT, an emphasized task is to provide financial stability. For this purpose, we intend to extend the “Mecénas Program” that has already been started in 2017, in which the diagnostic companies provide support for MLDT with a certain scientific and professional purpose, which aims to provide training for the members of the MLDT and at the same time increases sales of the sponsoring companies. This program will hopefully contribute to the establishment of a stable management of MLDT. We are also aiming to increase the incomes of the Society by vending the advertising interfaces of the MLDT website over the next 3 years.

Scheduled timeline: continuous.

### **3. Education, post-gradual education and professional training**

#### ***3.1 Coordination of the topics of postgraduate courses and course dates***

Postgraduate training for laboratory professionals has gone through several important transformations in recent years and decades. For more than a decade, the possibility of acquiring a laboratory specialization qualification with a non-medical degree has been achieved. There are dozens of colleagues currently working with this type of clinical biochemistry qualification. Similarly to medical doctors with specialization in laboratory diagnostics and to pharmacists with specialization, they must earn professional credit points every five years. One of the opportunities for acquiring such credit points is the participation on 3-5 days of professional educational postgraduate courses organized by universities and hospitals. The professional and timely coordination of these courses will be realized by the four universities of medicine in cooperation with the MLDT, taking into account the needs of the members of the Society.

Scheduled timeline: continuous

#### ***3.2 Outcome Tracking of Laboratory Analyst Training, Defining the Competencies of Laboratory Analysts***

In the field of laboratory diagnostics, for more than two decades, the launch of Medical Diagnostic Laboratory Analyst (ODLA) training provided a major professional supplement of laboratory professionals. In recent years, ODLA has been supplemented with the Medical Research Laboratory Analyst (OKLA) specialty. At present, the implementation of the training is considerably complicated by the fact

that there is common educational trunk for radiography training in the imaging diagnostic profession and the laboratory analytical training start with a as a medical and laboratory imaging diagnostic analyst (OLKDA). Although the MLDT has always supported the motion that the laboratory analyst education (OKLA and ODLA) should be separated of the imaging profession training and the laboratory analyst education should transform to a 6 or 7 semester educational program, but this has been unrealistic for many years due to a number of administrative obstacles. At the same time, it would be very important to keep track of trained analysts in order to get an idea of what fields are they working currently and how is their representation in the laboratory profession, and to see their possibilities, to obtain jobs that are appropriate for their qualifications and whether they receive corresponding wages. We also recommend to prepare a list of competency for laboratory analysts.

Scheduled timeline: December 2018

### ***3.3 Facilitating Technician and Specialized Technician Training***

The number of laboratory analyst qualified personnel today is too low to be able to provide the professional needs and professional workload supply of the laboratory diagnostic staff needed in the field. The correspondent training of laboratory analysts has been completed, and full-time students - even if they remain to work in the health care sector - can only represent the tip of the iceberg but not the base of it. In our country, laboratory assistant training is quite diverse. However, it is well known to us that the activity of highly qualified laboratory staff is appreciated. The quality of the mostly OKJ-type trainings is often low. Since 2015, the University of Miskolc (and with a smaller number of students at the University of Pécs) Faculty of Healthcare has undertaken the role to prepare the accreditation process of the curriculum of the technician /specialized technician training within the academic framework and proceed with the education of students now attending the 2nd grade. The training takes place as a vocational training at the level of higher education, where students are included in the system according to their entrance points. The training period is 4 semesters, the last half of which is 2x3 weeks of internship. Given that the training is part of the Bologna training system, an open system, as opposed to OKJ training, it is possible to join the analyst training and then to join further steps of education. The leading trainers and the MLDT's management will strive to develop a proper recruitment strategy and to disseminate the results.

Scheduled timeline: continuous