



## LABORATORY ACCREDITATION

COLA's Laboratory Accreditation program is an excellent quality assurance tool, as well as, a convenient way to fulfill requirements of the Clinical Laboratory Improvement Amendments of 1988 (CLIA) and the Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations.

Developed by physicians, the COLA accreditation program is educational in nature. COLA's goal is to assist laboratory professionals in operating an accurate and efficient laboratory.

COLA is approved by the Centers for Medicaid and Medicare Services for the following specialties:

- Chemistry/Urinalysis
- Hematology
- Microbiology
- Immunology
- Immunohematology:  
Full Transfusion Services or  
Only Blood Component Storage
- Cytology
- Pathology

### Benefits of COLA Accreditation

You will want COLA accreditation because COLA provides you with benefits beyond an on-site survey, including the following:

- COLA prepares the laboratory by providing the director the opportunity to conduct a comprehensive Self-Assessment using the same criteria as COLA surveyors.

- COLA will evaluate the laboratory's Self-Assessment and provide it with a report of recommended improvements that can be incorporated before the on-site survey.
- COLA's surveyors are trained to educate and assist laboratory staff and offer suggestions and advice to help them improve laboratory performance during the on-site survey. Laboratories receive formal feedback soon after completion of the on-site survey.
- COLA provides timely information regarding all regulations related to the laboratory including OSHA, Stark Rules, and others, not just CLIA.
- COLA participants receive the bi-monthly *COLA Insights* newsletter containing concise articles on various aspects of laboratory practice and medical practice—articles that are easily understood and that provide specific, hands-on information.
- COLA offers a variety of educational publications to COLA participants at a 15 percent discount. These include the *Laboratory Quality Assurance: A Plan for Implementation*, an *OSHA Self-Assessment*, and 22 Individual Procedures for Waived and PPM laboratory tests.
- COLA offers a variety of on-line educational courses to COLA participants at a discount. A number of courses to increase your knowledge of quality laboratory practices are available individually or as part of the Laboratory Director Program by visiting [www.LabUniversity.org](http://www.LabUniversity.org).
- COLA requirements are based on years of clinical experience. These requirements reflect proce-

 [WWW.COLA.ORG](http://WWW.COLA.ORG)



For information about COLA services or for technical inquiries, call our Information Resource Center at (800) 981-9883.

dures that are necessary for any laboratory to produce consistently accurate results.

- The Laboratory Excellence Award (LEA) gives COLA laboratories a special recognition when they have proved exemplary patient testing performance. The LEA is given to those COLA laboratories who complete an on-site inspection and are found to be compliant with COLA essential and required criteria, have documented successful proficiency testing for the prior three testing events and have no valid complaints against the laboratory. This program went into effect starting January 1, 2001.
- COLA accreditation is a cost-effective alternative that meets quality laboratory standards.
- COLA-accredited laboratories meet CLIA requirements and are recognized by the Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations.

### **How to Apply**

To apply for COLA accreditation, complete a COLA application and return it with a payment for all appropriate fees. Payment may be in the form of a check when mailing the form, or you may charge fees to your MasterCard or VISA and submit the form on-line.

If you use your credit card, then please be sure to provide the name that appears on the card, the card number, the expiration date, and your signature in the spaces provided on the application. Applicants paying by credit card may fax their application to COLA at (410) 381-8611.

Within two weeks you will receive an accreditation packet and instructions for completing each step of the accreditation process. If you wish to receive an enrollment application by mail or fax, or have any questions about COLA's Laboratory Accreditation program, then please feel free to contact our professionals in the Information Resource Center.

They can be reached by calling (800) 981-9883, Monday through Friday, from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., eastern time.

## **COLA ACCREDITATION IS A COST-EFFECTIVE ALTERNATIVE THAT MEETS QUALITY LABORATORY STANDARDS.**

### **Biennial Fees for Physician Office Laboratories**

COLA's pricing structure is based on test volume and the number of specialties in which testing is performed. The rates are set according to each state.

COLA provides a credit of \$100 at the time of enrollment to laboratories switching from a Certificate of Compliance to a Certificate of Accreditation. Additional discounts may also apply.

While COLA's pricing is based on test volume, it is important to identify the number of specialties that are performed at time of enrollment.

To enroll in COLA Accreditation, please contact a COLA Information Resource Representative by calling 800-981-9883.

All fees are subject to change without prior notice. Refunds of these fees will be given if requested in writing by an applicant laboratory within 60 days of application and prior to an on-site survey. A cancellation fee of \$400 will be charged to the laboratory.