



COLLEGE of AMERICAN  
PATHOLOGISTS

# Increased Workload

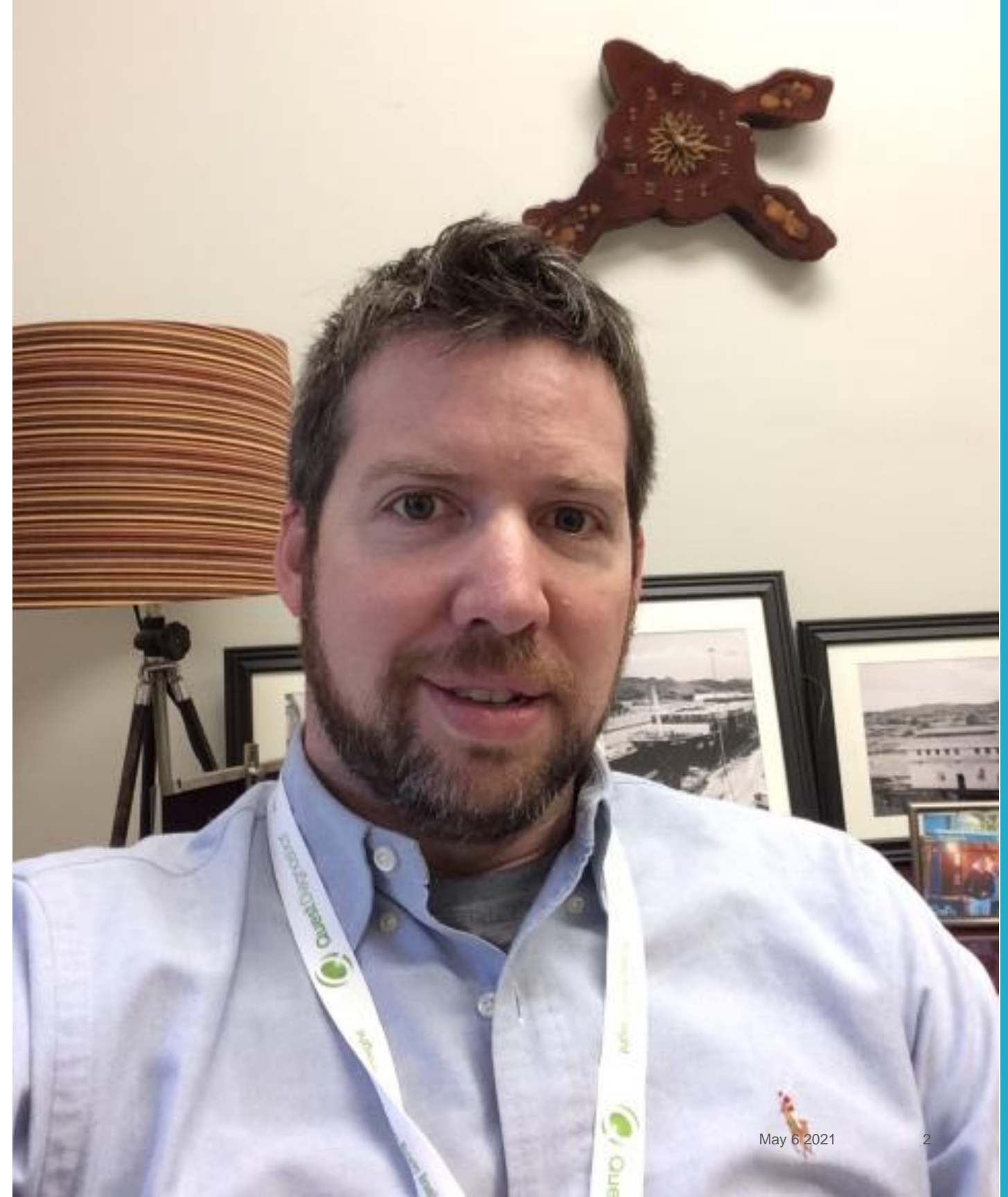
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Angie Foster MD, FCAP

June 17, 2022

# Weston H. Rothrock MD, FCAP Member

- Member- New in Practice Committee
- Board Certified in Anatomic and Clinical Pathology
- Associate Medical Director, Quest Diagnostics, Tampa, FL



# Angie Foster MD, FCAP

- **Member, New in Practice Committee**
- **Board certified in AP/CP and Hematopathology**
- **Medical Director, Point of Care Testing**
- **Works in private practice in large non-academic hospital in St. Louis, MO**



# Disclaimer

**The information presented today represents the opinions of the panelists and does not represent the opinion or position of the CAP.**

**This should not be used as a substitute for professional assistance.**

**The information in this presentation is provided for educational purposes only and is not legal advice.**



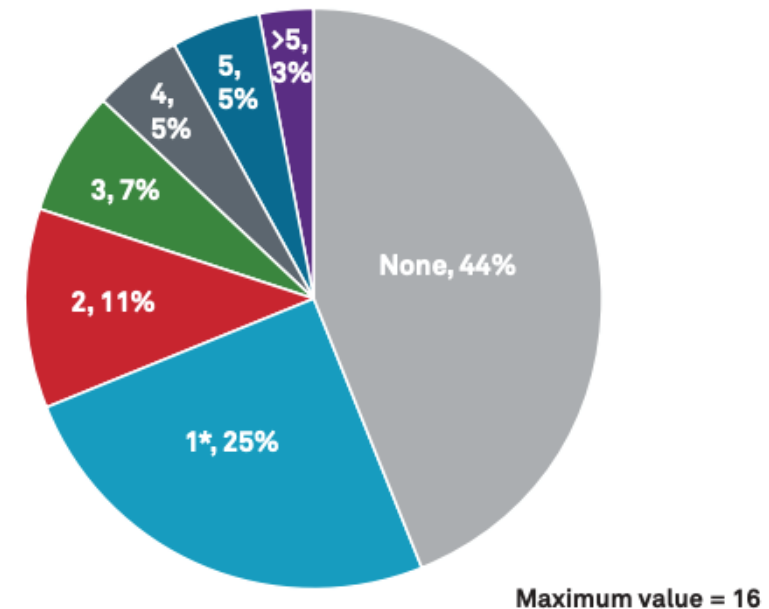
# Topic for Today's Discussion

- The current state of Pathologist workforce
- The current state of laboratory technician workforce
- Strategies to manage increased workload

## Current workforce issues: Pathologists 2021 Practice Leader Survey

- 56% of practices expected to hire at least one pathologist in 2021
  - Up from 2018 (52%) and 2016 (41%)
- Practices are trying to grow
  - 60% trying to add Pathologists to practice
- Practices seeking specialty AP and General AP/CP
- 40% had no preference in amount of experience

Figure D-2: Number of Pathologist Positions Practice Sought to Fill in 2021 (n=282)

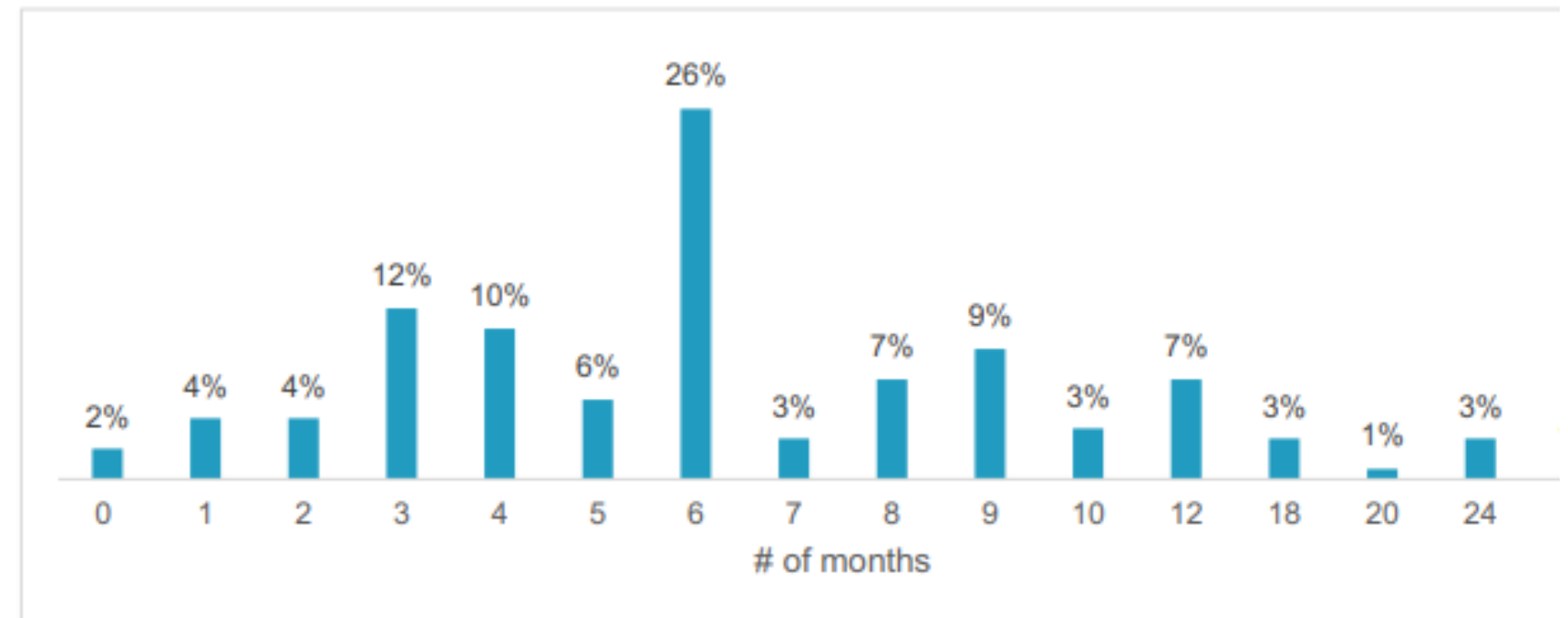


# Current workforce issues: Pathologists

## 2021 Practice Leader Survey

- 26% of positions were filled at or after 6 months of posting

Figure D-8: Length of Time to Fill Open Pathologist Positions (n=144)

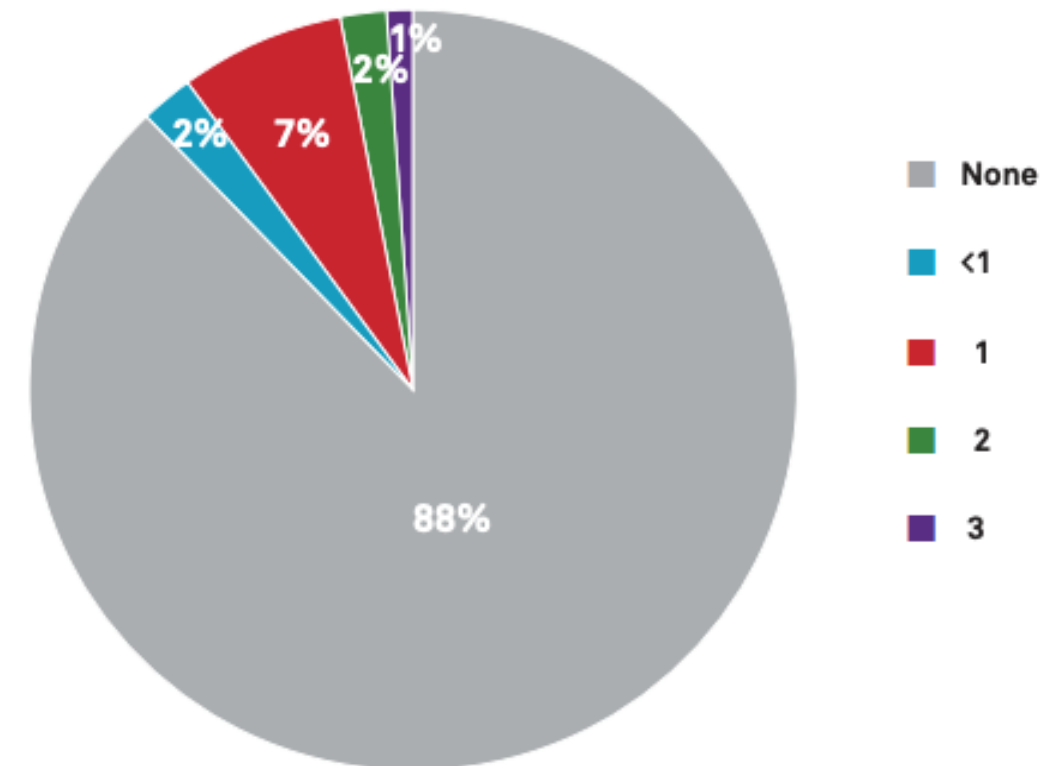


# Current workforce issues: Pathologists

## 2021 Practice Leader Survey

- Only 12% reported they eliminated Pathologist positions
  - Decided not to replace retiring/departing Pathologist
  - Lost funding
  - Lost contracts with hospitals, etc
  - Lost position due to merger

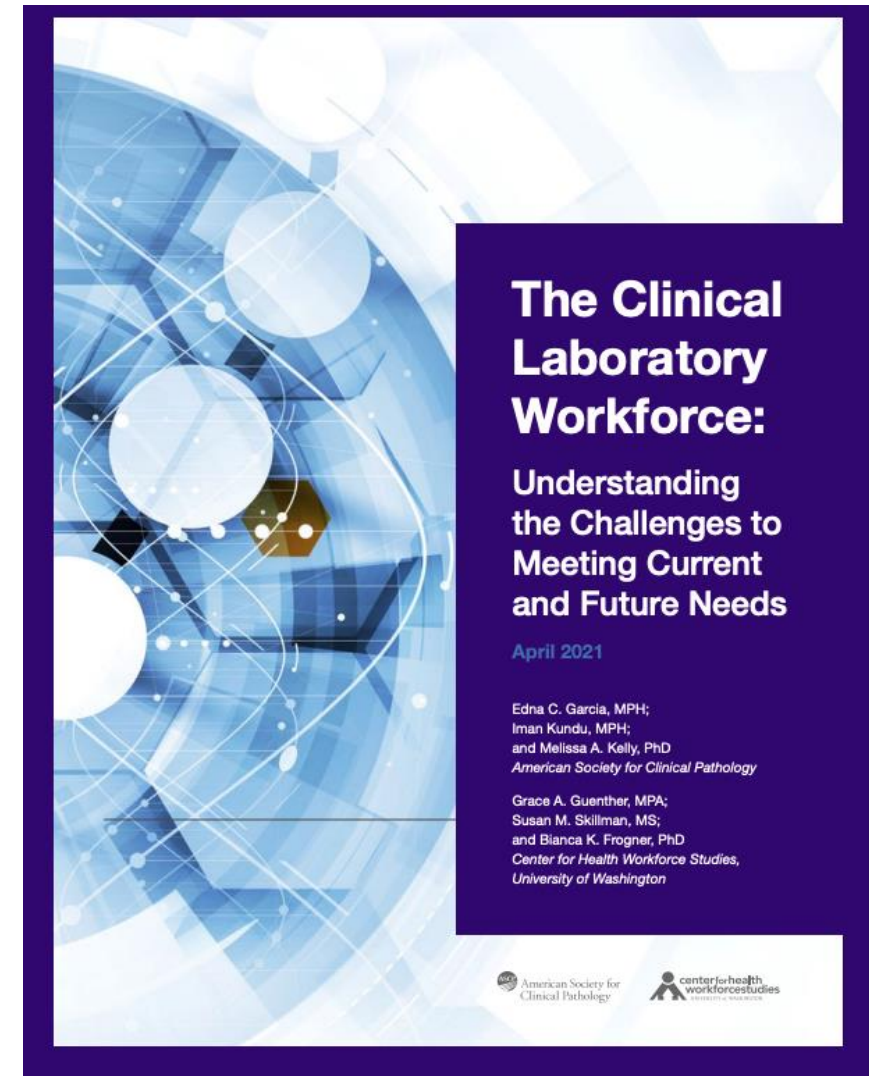
Figure D-10: Number of Positions Eliminated in Practice in 2021 (n=256)





# Current Workforce issues: Laboratory technicians/support staff

- Clinical lab tech occupations are projected to increase by 7% between 2019 and 2029
- Labs are finding it hard to recruit and keep employees
- Many lab technicians are retiring
- “There’s more jobs available than there are students to fill them.... Every student in the past eight years was employed at the time of graduation.”



# Current Workforce issues:

## Laboratory technicians/support staff

- **Recruitment challenges**
  - Finding applicants with necessary education
  - Presence/absence of training programs in city lab is located
  - Lack of clear hiring specifications
  - Visibility of the field
  - Geographic location: rural labs suffering

# Current Workforce issues:

## Laboratory technicians/support staff

- **Retention challenges**
  - Competition with other labs
  - Lower salaries than other healthcare fields (MLS vs RN)
  - Limited potential for career advancement or increased compensation
  - Burnout
  - Lack of recognition

# Things to consider

- **Effects on quality**
- **Turn around time concerns**
- **Work vs home duties**
- **Short vs long term**
- **Workplace norms and morals**
- **Potential for cross training**

# The work/life balance

- **Is the stress at work, home, or both?**
- **Are there home maintenance tasks or care duties that can be performed by others?**
  - **Lawn**
  - **Pool**
  - **Pets**
  - **Childcare**
  - **School drop off and pick up**
  - **Meal preparation**
  - **Cleaning**
  - **Laundry**



# The work portion

- **How does the group as a whole feel?**
  - Has there been a change in volume or staffing?
    - Is this anticipated to be a long- or short-term change?
  - Do others feel there is too much work?
  - The money: time ratio- where do you fall on the continuum
    - Some people don't seem to need to go home
    - Your work capacity may be different- is this compatible with your group?
    - May change throughout your career and life seasons

# Self inventory

- **Introvert/extrovert**
- **Outside hobbies, activities, and interests**
- **Personal health**
- **Family situation**
  - Hours of significant other
  - Young children
  - Elderly parents
  - Pets

# Finding the balance

- **Less work**
- **More people**
- **Work more efficiently**

# Distribution of work

- Is work distributed equitably?
- Are there some tasks others are more suited to perform?
- Cross-training opportunities
- Maintain contact with recently retired colleagues
- Consider locums help
- Step away from non-essential duties
- Eliminate non-value add steps
  - Move work/specimens/slides -not yourself

# Plan your day

- **Limit interruptions**
- **Plan day around fixed points/meetings**
  - Deadlines for stains
  - Usual availability of work
- **Avoid having a meeting when a memo or notice could suffice**



# Do the work faster

- Smooth delivery profile
- Templates
- Dictation software
- Bookmark frequently used reference websites
- Electronic folder for notes and quick reference materials
- Multiple monitors
- Get up to walk around/ take (short) breaks

# Prevention

- **Succession planning**
  - Tasks
  - Key positions
- **Cross training**
- **Business continuity plan**
  - Planned and unplanned changes
- **Pipeline of candidates**
  - Residency programs
  - Former colleagues
  - Locum relationships
  - Network labs

# How Severe is the distress?

- **Quality of work decreases**
- **Talk it over**
  - **Mentor**
  - **Family/friends**
  - **Mental health professional**

## Get help

**Risk of substance abuse**

**Counselor other mental health professional**

**Crisis line**

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# Resources

- **New in Practice**

- <https://www.cap.org/member-resources/new-in-practice/engaging-with-the-pathology-community>

- **Finding Your Work-Life Balance**

- <https://www.cap.org/member-resources/articles/finding-your-work-life-balance>

- **CAP practice leader survey**

- <https://www.cap.org/gated-assets/uploads/private/2021-practice-leader-survey-report.pdf>

- **ASCP clinical laboratory workforce report**

- <https://www.ascp.org/content/get-involved/institute-of-science-technology-policy/workforce-initiatives#>

- **Pathologist Pipeline Champions**

- <https://www.cap.org/member-resources/residents/cap-for-medical-students/pathologist-pipeline-champions>

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