



This manual has been developed to provide histotechs at the state and region level and others promoting Histotechnology Professionals Day (HPD) with the necessary tools to conduct an effective publicity campaign.

Be sure to visit www.nsh.org for additional information and updates about HPD activities where you can learn how to obtain Histotechnology Professionals Day t-shirts.

Timing can be crucial for the success of your plans to publicize HPD, especially when you intend to approach your government officials for proclamations and when working with your local media. You are urged to plan well ahead to ensure that your efforts will be successful. Your facilities marketing or public relations department may be able to offer you assistance and suggestions for how to publicize this celebration in your locale. The earlier you begin planning, the better your chances of achieving your HPD goals.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

- 1. What is “National Histotechnology Professionals Day”**
- 2. Membership Information and History**
- 3. Description of the Profession**
- 4. Making the Most of Histotechnology Professionals Day**
- 5. Official Proclamation – Sample**
- 6. Letters to the Governor and City Mayors asking for a Gubernatorial or Mayoral Proclamation for “ Histotechnology Professionals Day”**
- 7. Media Release**
- 8. How to prepare an “elevator speech”.**

WHAT IS HISTOTECHNOLOGY PROFESSIONALS DAY?

The National Society for Histotechnology (NSH) announced the inaugural celebration of an annual Histotechnology Professionals Day on March 10, 2010. Histotechnology Professionals Day is being organized to aid in the public’s awareness of the discipline. Most would agree the field is not well known among lay people. The Society has been working to educate young people about histotechnology as a career option with the annual Career Day program. Histotechnology Professionals Day is another opportunity to promote the profession of histotechnology and heighten awareness to the public and other allied health professions regarding the role that histotechnologists serve on the healthcare team.

GOALS

- to recognize the vital contributions made by histotechnology professionals practicing in different laboratory settings
- to recognize the professional dedication of histotechnology professionals to the health care consumer
- to educate the public, government and private sectors about the key role played by histotechnology professionals
- to enhance the image of histotechnology professionals in the public and private sectors, especially among other health care professionals

MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION AND HISTORY

NSH History

On July 28, 1973 an invitation was sent to several interested individuals to meet for the purpose of forming a national society. On August 27, 1973, nine people met at the Palmer House Hotel in Chicago, IL to set the framework for forming the society. Later that year 43 people representing several states met in at the Sheraton Hotel in Silver Spring, MD. These 43 people became the Founding Board. At this meeting the name for the group was chosen: *The National Society for Histotechnology* and the first officers were selected:

On October 3, 1973, The National Society for Histotechnology was officially formed. The founding Board determined that the intentions of this professional organization were to promote continuing education, sharing technical information and unity of the profession. The advancement of the discipline rested on the ability of its practitioners to share scientific and technical knowledge among the worldwide histology community.

The society's founders struggled to find a means to reach and embrace histotechnologists tucked away in clinical, research, veterinary and pharmaceutical laboratories around the country. With little more than a spark and a vision, the society was formed as a result of the passion of those committed to making this dream a reality. July 22, 1974 The National Society for Histotechnology was incorporated.

The Board of Directors also felt the need to have a means to publish techniques and other scientific information for histotechnologists. In 1975 the Board appointed a committee to study the requirements for a journal and in September 1977, the first Journal of Histotechnology was published. The first issue was mailed as a promotional issue to 11,209 histotechnologists.

Today the NSH is a strong viable professional organization representing the histology community around the world. It hosts a highly successful, annual Symposium/Convention, publishes a quarterly, world class journal a member newsletter NSH in Action, offers numerous merit awards and educational scholarships, develops and publishes educational resource materials, and prepares relevant standards and procedures for the profession. None of this could be achieved or sustained without the efforts of the many committed individuals who volunteer their time and energies to ensure our continued success.

NSH FACTS

Total Membership – 3,518

U.S Members – 3,199

Student Members - 171

International Members - 319

DESCRIPTION OF THE PROFESSION

Histotechnicians prepare tissues for examination under a microscope by a pathologist. The tissue may be removed to determine cause of death, presence of diseases such as cancer, spread of disease, or proper course of treatment. After the tissue is removed, histotechnicians prepare slides so pathologists can examine it under a microscope. Histotechnicians cut the tissue into thin slices, mount it on slides, and stain the tissue so the cells are clearly visible under the microscope. They also perform special studies on tissue to identify cancer or cause of disease. Histotechnicians may work in clinics, operating rooms, veterinary pathology, forensics, research, pharmaceutical pathology, or even marine biology. Histotechnicians must complete a two year associates degree and one year of experience or have successfully completed a National Accrediting Agency for Clinical Laboratory Sciences (NAACLS) accredited histology program after high school. Histotechnician associate degree programs take two years to complete, while certificate programs are generally ten to twelve months in length.

Histotechnicians may become histotechnologists after earning a baccalaureate degree and completing one year of experience or attending a National Accrediting

Agency for Clinical Laboratory Sciences (NAACLS) accredited histotechnology program. They may perform more complex procedures like electron microscopy, immunohistochemistry, or enzyme histochemistry. Electron microscopy involves using an electron microscope. Histotechnologists have to use a regular microscope to cut the tissues thin enough to view in an electron microscope. The electron beam allows pathologists to see the inner structure of cells, including the cell's nucleus. In immunohistochemistry, the histotechnologists localizes proteins in cells of a tissue section by using antibodies that binds specifically to antigens. Immunohistochemical staining is widely used in the diagnosis of abnormal cells such as those found in cancerous tumors. Histotechnologists have to be able to solve problems related to unusual test results, instrumentation, or lab procedures. Other duties may include teaching personnel, a laboratory, or directing a school for histotechnology.

CERTIFICATION:

The American Society for Clinical Pathology is the national certification agency for histotechnicians and histotechnologists

Certified Members:

HT - 21,124

HTL - 2,716

QIHC - 980

The ASCP certification is valid for three years before a Certified Maintenance Program must be completed. The CMP requires 32 hours of continue education every 3 years.

EDUCATIONAL REQUIREMENTS

Histotechnicians must complete a two year associates degree and one year of experience or have successfully completed a National Accrediting Agency for Clinical Laboratory Sciences (NAACLS) accredited histology program.

Histotechnologist have a baccalaureate degree and complete one year of training in a histotechnology laboratory or attend a NCCLS accredited histotechnology program. NACCLS lists thirty accredited histotechnician programs and three histotechnologist programs in 2009.

STATE LICENSURE

Histotechnology licensure/regulation exists in_____ states. Histotechnology professionals in a clinical environment work alongside pathologists, physicians trained to render a diagnosis from tissue samples.

MAKING THE MOST OF HISTOTECHNOLOGY PROFESSIONALS DAY

Workplace activities:

- Buy NSH Histotechnology Professionals Day T-shirts for the staff.
- Make buttons from the design to handout throughout the hospital.
- Set up an exhibit at your workplace.
- Provide tours of the histology department inviting other departments within the institution to come for “coffee” or “snacks”.
- If your institution is amenable, offer an open house to the public, to raise awareness of the role of Histotechnology.
- Invite administrators to do a site visit to see what you do.
- Change your voicemail greeting to include the message “Today is Histotechnology Professionals Day” or answer the telephone in the same manner.
- Include “March 10, 2010 is Histotechnology Professionals Day below your signature line on all e-mails you send.
- Work with the communications department to have a “Histotechnology Professionals Day” awareness e-mail blitz sent throughout the organization.
- Work with the IT department to design a special Web page highlighting histology in the workplace.
- If appropriate, invite the local media to tour your facility – a first hand look will help them understand your role as a health care professional.

Community activities:

- Participate in career days at the local high schools and community colleges, (brochures from NSH).
- Volunteer to provide a program to the local elementary schools that will explain Histotechnology. NSH has a coloring book that might be a great gift for the students.
- Ask your employer to sponsor a group of histologist in a “community walk, race, golf scramble or other public event.

- Organize the local chapter of your Histotechnology society to work on a “habitat” or other community project”.
- Histology Schools could hold an open house, highlighting class projects.

Media Activities:

- Send the local newspaper a news release regarding Histotechnology Professionals Day and ask if they will do a “features” article about what histology is, and how important they are to the health care team.
- Promote histology schools and the programs that are offered in the community – create an article for the business section especially with workforce issues in the limelight.
- Invite local radio and television reporters and producers to create segments about the value of Histotechnology – offer to be a resource for segments that might be appropriate for your expertise.
- Many local TV and radio stations are required to provide time for Public Service Announcements (PSA), this may be a great opportunity to highlight the local histology group.
- Send announcements about Awards Recipients’ to the local newspaper for their public announcement section of the paper.
- Many local newspapers have a weekly business update of who is promoted and their new title.

OFFICIAL GOVERNMENT PROCLAMATION

One of the most important things that the organization can do to build awareness for the Histology Profession is to receive official recognition from your local elected official, mayor and/or governor. A proclamation and maybe a key to the city may be secured. This may be accompanied by a photo opportunity. Even if your organization received a proclamation last year, follow up again this year.

- Contact the office of your local elected official (mayor or governor)
 - Explain to the secretary or the individual answering the telephone that you would like to secure a proclamation for Histotechnology Professionals Day.
 - Emphasize the significance of Histotechnology and that this is the first declared day.
 - If you have events planned for the day, you may want to share that information.
- Stress the importance of the histotechnologist to public health.

- **You may send a sample proclamation with the appropriate wording that describes the profession.**
- **Send a copy of the proclamation wording on appropriate letterhead. Add a cover letter confirming your conversation and emphasize the date, time and place.**
- **Thank the official in writing for granting or considering your request.**

NOTE:

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SAMPLE LETTER TO GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS

Dear (name of official):

Histotechnology Professionals Day will be observed nationally on March 10, 2010. This day recognizes the scientific and technical personnel whose work in the clinical laboratory gives our nation the best possible health care.

I am the Histotechnology Professionals Day's coordinator for this state/city/district and I am writing to say that we would very much like the day to be officially recognized in our city/state.

I am requesting that the (mayor/governor) participate in a ceremony at his/her office to sign a proclamation declaring a celebration of Histotechnology Professionals Day.

Histotechnology is a science concerned with the microscopic architecture of tissue biopsies which may be altered if an abnormality, such as cancer, is present. An understanding of this science enables the Histotechnologist to prepare tissue samples distinguishing various structures and pathologies through microscopic examination. Once formal training is complete, continuing education via professional state societies such as the (name of state) Society for Histotechnology is critical to keep up with the continually evolving new technologies' and methodologies. For more information see: www.NSH.org

The wording for a suggested proclamation is enclosed for your convenience. I look forward to hearing from you regarding the approval of the proclamation and the scheduled day and time for the signing. I am happy to address any questions you may have about this request. My contact information is provided below.

Thank you so much for your help by bringing awareness to this very important profession.

Sincerely:

(name/contact information)

SAMPLE PROCLAMATION

Whereas, the histotechnologist, through skillful application of sophisticated laboratory techniques, enables the seemingly invisible world of tissue structures to become visible under the microscope; and

Whereas, the search to unlock the secrets held by tissue structures reaches into many fields, histotechnologists comprise medical professionals, veterinary, pharmaceutical and industry research scientists, anatomists, chemists; and

Whereas, the health of the citizens of "city/state" is a major concern and responsibility of all health professionals serving them; and

Whereas, professionals in clinical histotechnology in " city/state" (if a licensure state you may say licensed technicians) are formally educated to perform cutting edge procedures, and

Whereas, professionals in histotechnological sciences are dedicated to the highest standards of professionalism, and are committed to maintaining and improving this through education lifelong learning, credentialing and personal commitment; and

NOW THEREFORE, I (name) THE (title) OF (city/state) DO HERBY PROCLAIM ,

MARCH 10, 2010

AS

HISTOTECHNOLOGY PROFESSIONALS DAY

I encourage all citizens of (city/state/county) to join in recognizing the significant contributions to safe medical and research environments provided through the skilled and conscientious efforts of histotechnologists.

Signed: _____

MEDIA RELEASE

Media and press releases should read like news stories and cover who, what, when, where, why and how. The release should include contact information, date or deadlines, lead paragraph, body copy and a final summarization paragraph/boiler plate.

- **Press releases should not exceed two pages, remember to be on point.**
- **Contact information: List your name and telephone number, or the person who will be the designated spokesperson.**
- **Dateline: The date and time of the event. This line should contain the key focus for the release.**
- **Lead Paragraph: Must be enticing, catching the reader's attention and contain the key message and purpose of the release (this may be your only opportunity to get the attention you are seeking. This paragraph should not be more than three sentences long and should answer the five "W's" (who, what, where, when, why).**
- **Body Copy: Fully develop your message. Provide details and explanations about the events you are promoting. Keep it short, space is limited.**
- **Final Paragraph/Boilerplate: Provides the description of your organization.**

Sample Press Release

**Histotechnology Professionals Day
March 10, 2010**

The National Society for Histotechnology announces the first annual Histotechnology Professionals Day to be held March 10, 2010 to celebrate the important contributions that are made each day by Histotechnology professionals in healthcare, research, environmental science, forensics, and industry.

50,000 histotechnology professionals are engaged in the identification of disease in patient tissue biopsies, the evaluation of drug reactions allowing for the discovery and marketing of new drug therapies, assessment of pollution and its effects on the environment and mankind, protection of the nation's food supply, as well as the development of new diagnostic procedures to aid in the diagnosis of cancer. In healthcare, the work of the histotechnologist is vital to the accurate identification of cancer and other diseases in patient tissue biopsies which is key to successful treatment and cure.

In every instance, Histotechnology professionals are dedicated to the eradication or prevention of disease and to improving the quality of life for all. Their vital work is often unknown to the general public yet their work touches our lives in profound ways.

The celebration of Histotechnology Professionals Day will help to increase public awareness of the important contributions of these professionals as well as to educate young people who may be interested in a challenging career in this important discipline.

ELEVATOR SPEECH

Every professional should have a short synoptic speech called an “elevator speech”. The speech should be a 15-30 second description of what they do as a professional. This speech is intended to tell listeners enough to make them want to learn more. It can be used in an elevator when someone asks “What is a Histotechnologist”? or when you have an opportunity to talk about your profession to the PTA, to your local elected officials, students or anyone who shows interest. Your hope is to create an opportunity for an in-depth discussion. You will raise awareness and visibility of the profession.

“I’m (name) a Histotechnologist working at (institute). I prepare slides for diagnosis from specimens received from surgery..... . It’s a great job because ... I also get to work with other health care professionals. I’m, glad I chose this field, I feel like I make a difference to the patients we serve.”

TIPS:

- Hospital policy or HIPPA Laws may require you to have your in-house Public Relations or Legal Department involved to review any material regarding the hospital, laboratory or services offered.
- Know your message: what do you feel should be conveyed about histotechnology that you want the public to hear? Make it your story and one worth telling.
- Know your audience. That may dictate how your message is conveyed or constructed. Your message to an elementary school would be quite different than a message intended for adults.
- Think of different angles to spin a story about histotechnology. Maybe you have an interesting histology teaching program, or you have new technology that the community is unaware exists. Sometimes the Media services will respond to a request to do a story about something different (ex: immunohistochemistry as a prognostic marker for breast cancer, rapid turnaround time for specimens and how this can directly relate to the quality of patient care).
- Remember to talk about your profession to anyone who is interested, you may be talking to someone who has a means of raising awareness for the profession.
- When requesting proclamations or media stories, allow adequate time for action.