



GODSWILL CHIKWENDU OKARA

- *Nominated for the position of IFBLS Board Director 2022-2024*

ASSOCIATION MEMBER

NIGERIA - Association of Medical Laboratory Scientists of Nigeria (AMLSN)

SPECIAL PROFESSIONAL INTERESTS:

- Postgraduate professional education in Biomedical Laboratory Science
- Specialised professional training and development of qualifications to enhance the practice of Biomedical Laboratory Science at specialist and consultant levels
- Quality Management System Implementation in medical laboratory practice
- The role and contribution of Biomedical Laboratory Science in global health security agenda
- Immunology, Clinical chemistry, Molecular Diagnostics and Genomics
- Appropriate ISCO categorization of Biomedical Laboratory Science professional status
- Regional and International collaboration for Health and Laboratory Workforce Strengthening
- Research and Publications

My background in academia and hospital laboratory practice has shaped my interest in professional education, capacity building, research and publication of research findings over the years. I am a registered medical laboratory scientist with training and qualifications in Clinical Chemistry, Immunology and Bacteriology. I have taught Clinical Chemistry and Immunology in a University Medical College, managed and headed a Department of Chemical Pathology and laboratory services in a University Teaching Hospital for years, before my current role as the Registrar & Secretary General of the West African Postgraduate College of Medical Laboratory Science, a regional postgraduate training institution of the Economic Commission of West African States (ECOWAS), under the technical supervision of the West African Health Organisation (WAHO), covering the sixteen countries of West Africa and Cameroon.

Nationally, I have served as a Member of Management Boards of Teaching Hospitals (2009 - 2015); Governing Board of Medical Laboratory Science Council of Nigeria (MLSCN) 2004-2007, 2013-2015; President, Association of Medical Laboratory Scientists of Nigeria (AMLSN) 2011-2014; Chairman, Assembly of Healthcare Professional Associations in Nigeria (2009-2019); Executive Member, Joint Health Sector Unions (2009-2019). I was actively involved in several Collective Bargaining Agreements (CBAs) with the Federal Government of Nigeria for salaries and wages of health professionals over the years. I served as a Senior Biomedical Consultant for National Health and Educational Institutions Rehabilitation Programme (1997-2002); as well as Senior National Consultant for upscaling molecular diagnostic laboratory network for COVID-19 testing in Nigeria (2020-2021).

In my current role as the Registrar/Secretary General of the West African Postgraduate College of Medical Laboratory Science (WAPCMLS), I provide administrative leadership for the accreditation of training institutions, oversight and coordination of training activities, examination and certification of specialist Biomedical Laboratory Scientists in all the training institutions across West Africa for the specialist Fellowship training programme of the College in ECOWAS member countries. I am a member of the ECOWAS Regional Council for Health Professionals' Education (ERCHE), as well as Member of a number of Advisory and Expert Committees of the West African Health Organisation.

I work closely with the President and Regional Council of College to provide leadership for the achievement of the mandate of the College for specialist professional training, providing expert advise to the West African Health Organisation and ECOWAS member countries on matters relating to health and biomedical laboratory services in West Africa. Currently, I provide advisory and mentorship support to medical laboratory scientists in East, Central and Southern Africa region in their ongoing effort to create a similar regional postgraduate College for Fellowship training within the East, Central and Southern Africa Health Community (ECSA-HC).

Externally, I serve as a Member of the Scientific Advisory Board and Key Opinion Leader for BD (Becton, Dickinson and Company) Diagnostics International, Eastern Europe, Middle East and African (EMA) region since 2013. In this capacity, I have provided expert professional advice in Clinical Chemistry through seminar and workshop presentations organized and hosted by BD Diagnostics International in various countries in Africa and Middle East.

SUGGESTION(S) FOR FUTURE IFBLS ACTIVITIES AND HOW YOU PLAN TO DEVELOP EACH:

- In my active participation in IFBLS World Congresses from 2010 in Nairobi Kenya, 2012 in Berlin Germany, 2014 in Taipei Taiwan, 2016 in Kobe Japan and to 2018 in Florence Italy, I have realized the immense capacity and potential of the IFBLS to influence the growth and status of the Biomedical Laboratory Science profession globally. The high impact of the 29th World Congress in Nairobi in 2010 gave rise to the formation of the West African Postgraduate College of Medical Laboratory Science, a regional body that is elevating and influencing the standard of healthcare practice, biomedical laboratory science education, training, health research, disease surveillance and prevention in Africa through laboratory workforce development.
 - I will work with other colleagues in the IFBLS Board to encourage similar regional network of Biomedical Laboratory Scientists for the development of the profession across regions.
 - I am seeking election as a Member of the IFBLS Board of Directors to leverage on my experience to network with other colleagues in increasing the global impact and clout of our professional body for the benefit of members, society and humanity. I will contribute in strengthening the relationship and influence of IFBLS with regional and global organisations for influencing and improving the standards of education, training, regulation and practice of the profession in member countries. A strong and focused IFBLS Board is very central to the work of IFBLS.
 - Identifying a network of Biomedical Laboratory Scientists to strengthen education and training for laboratory workforce capacity development, Continuing Professional Development activities and encouraging publication of research work in the IFBLS Journal by members.
 - IFBLS has a rich mix of experts and specialists in her membership, as well as the global spread to position it as an International Development Implementing Partner for multilateral development agencies. It is worthwhile exploiting this huge potential.
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