



Executive Search



Chief Executive Officer

Client Overview

[COLA](#) has retained Sterling Martin Associates to search for its next ***Chief Executive Officer***, based in Columbia, Maryland.

Established in 1988, COLA was born out of four organizations – the American Medical Association (AMA), the American College of Physicians (ACP), the American Academy of Family Physicians (AAFP), and the College of American Pathologists (CAP). COLA is a physician-directed organization whose purpose is to promote excellence in laboratory medicine and patient care through a program of voluntary education, consultation, and accreditation. COLA accredits nearly 8,000 medical laboratories. COLA is an independent, nonprofit organization whose education-based programs and standards enable clinical laboratories and staff to meet U.S. Clinical Laboratory Improvement Amendments (CLIA 88) and other regulatory requirements. COLA also accredits laboratories in Canada, the Caribbean, the Central Pacific, and Bermuda. Patient care and patient safety are at the core of COLA’s work.

COLA is governed by a 12-member Board of Directors made up of medical professionals from across the country. Approximately 70 professionals staff the organization, including a dedicated group of surveyors who travel throughout the year to visit and consult with clinical laboratories. COLA’s ~\$12.5M income is derived primarily from program service revenue.

COLA has become a recognized thought leader in the field of laboratory medicine, and the organization has introduced a number of industry “firsts:”

- Developing the first-ever Quality Management System (QMS) for laboratory accreditation in the United States.
- Devising a universal accreditation model that can be adapted by any organization in any field to review the implementation of quality standards, while preserving opportunities to make process improvements.
- Applying a holistic approach to accreditation, stressing education, consultation, and technological innovation. COLA provides laboratories with the guidance to navigate a complex accreditation process, while providing the information, expert advice, classroom opportunities, and emerging best practices in the area of quality control.
- Creating a groundbreaking laboratory management desktop tool (www.colacentral.com) that gives laboratory personnel the ability to manage regulatory compliance requirements electronically.
- Expanding COLA's international presence by convening the first-ever World Lab Forum in 2006, an event that gathered laboratory professionals from around the world for the purpose of creating a shared vision for establishing appropriate quality standards.

For more information, please visit www.cola.org.

Chief Executive Officer

The Chief Executive Officer (CEO) is COLA's chief staff executive. Under the broad direction of COLA's Board of Directors, the CEO is responsible for guiding COLA's vision and mission and for maintaining a high performing organization that effectively supports the work of its clients. This position is responsible for the overall management and operation of COLA, implementation of Board directives and policies, and financial and personnel management. The CEO serves as the "face" of the organization.

This is an exciting opportunity for a highly skilled executive who has experience in a leadership role for an organization of COLA's size and scope. The CEO will be a strategic visionary and an experienced executive with significant leadership experience. Familiarity or experience with accreditation or standards-setting organizations will be a plus for candidates.

Specific Duties & Responsibilities

Under the general direction of the Board of Directors, the CEO will be responsible for the following duties and activities:

Strategy & Planning

- Collaborate with the Board of Directors to develop, plan, and implement COLA's strategic direction, ensuring that a Strategic Plan with appropriate annual metrics is in place.
- Develop a regular process to review the Strategic Plan, reporting progress to ensure that priorities and resources align. With the Board of Directors' agreement, correct course as needed based on internal or external factors.
- Enhance COLA's already-strong reputation in the field of medical/clinical laboratory accreditation.
- Continue to grow COLA's international focus to provide education, consultation, and accreditation services to medical/clinical laboratories worldwide to foster global quality and safe outcomes for patients.
- Oversee the day-to-day operations of COLA to provide for the sustainability and long-term stability of the organization.

Governance | Compliance | Risk Management

- Ensure the Board of Directors is kept fully informed on the condition of the organization and on all the important factors that influence it.
- Support the Board of Directors and COLA committees in order to ensure governance efficiency and effectiveness.
- Ensure excellent communication within the governance and staff structure.
- Foster and encourage active volunteer leadership, participation, and development across all levels of the organization.
- Ensure the maintenance of official records and documents consistent with COLA policies, and ensure that there is effective compliance with federal, state, and local regulations.

External Relations

- Serve as a key internal and external spokesperson for COLA, in conjunction with the Board Chair, speaking for the organization to the media and public.
- Lead efforts to enhance organizational visibility and awareness, including further developing relationships with relevant partner organizations.
- Ensure continued productive partnerships with federal policy makers, regulators and collaborating organizations.
- Ensure regular and ongoing effective communications with all COLA constituent groups.
- In conjunction with the senior team, lead public relations efforts as they relate to key regulatory activities, mission-related activities, and COLA events.
- In conjunction with the senior team, ensure all communication and public relations materials and plans are in keeping with organization brand guidelines and depict the accurate message regarding COLA initiatives.

Program Development | Advocacy

- Collaborate with staff, board, and volunteers, overseeing and managing the development and execution of policy goals and tactics aligned with the Strategic Plan.
- Focus intently on issues that affect COLA's client laboratories. Actively engage with and pursue input from the medical/clinical laboratory base, in order to address issues and needs.

- Champion medical/clinical laboratories in ways that clearly advance their professional status. Ensure the that the organization’s program delivery and solutions are relevant, of consistently high quality, and client-centered.
- Engage volunteers and staff to oversee the development of learning resources, tools, and consulting activities that enhance the medical/clinical laboratory “experience.”
- Further develop and expand the COLA consulting services to broaden the organization’s influence and impact on quality management and process improvement systems and solutions.
- Lead the active engagement of the COLA in appropriate coalitions, think-tanks, and other policy groups.
- In cooperation with relevant COLA staff and the COLA Board of Directors, monitor federal and state agencies and policy issues to ensure a proactive role in influencing policy or legislation that could affect the COLA and its constituents.
- Ensure oversight of the development of COLA communications strategies related to advocacy matters.

Organizational Culture

- Champion organizational culture and values. Build effective working relationships with all employees. Contribute to creating a positive work environment that promotes staff satisfaction.
- Practice servant-leadership internally, ensuring good talent management and adherence to best practices and applicable employment law.
- Facilitate organizational operating stability, by continuing to attract, engage, and retain high caliber staff.
- Develop and manage an effective staff team to achieve the strategic goals and to conduct the business of the organization successfully.
- Ensure that human resources are allocated in a manner that promotes and supports a positive results-focused work environment.

Financial Management | Performance

- Work with staff to propose an annual organizational budget for Board of Directors’ approval based on an assessment of needs, external environmental factors, and the COLA Strategic Plan. Assume accountability for financial stability as well as regular reports to the Board of Directors.
- In conjunction with COLA staff and volunteer groups, ensure the achievement of the annual operational plan and financial goals with appropriate resource allocation, goals, and performance metrics.
- Ensure a financial management strategy that promotes good stewardship throughout the organization and makes certain that both systems and strategies are managed well.

Ideal Background & Experience | Qualities & Characteristics

The ideal candidate will have been a senior executive leader with experience in a healthcare organization, medical institution, academic institution, and/or with experience with accreditation-based organizations. Specific qualifications include:

- A bachelor's degree from an accredited college or university; master's degree preferred.
- Experience as a CEO/ED or senior executive having worked in a similar or larger size organization.
- A minimum of seven years of leadership experience in a nonprofit or healthcare-related role.
- Experience working with a nonprofit governing board on matters involving strategy and vision.
- Proven track record of strategic leadership and accomplishment of annual goals.
- Knowledge of medical/clinical laboratory accreditation a plus.
- Experience advocating with federal, state, and local governments a plus.
- Ability to build consensus among diverse groups.
- Ability to blend a variety of interests, both scientific and patient support-oriented, around a common set of goals.
- A high-level customer service orientation, exhibiting both internal hospitality and external customer satisfaction.
- Strong financial management and strategic insight to deliver on the strategic initiatives through the development of programs and services.
- Strategic thinker who sees the big picture and motivates staff, volunteers, donors, and key constituents toward a common vision.

Personal and Professional Qualities

- Act ethically and adhere to the COLA mission and core values.
- A unifier, with the ability to assess the organization's current position and build strategies to advance it rapidly and strategically.
- Demonstrate empathetic concern and emotional intelligence in interactions with clients, staff, members, volunteers, and key influencers.
- Ability to foster trust and build a sense of a shared purpose and commitment with the Board, staff, volunteer leaders, and key influencers.
- Reacts appropriately and strategically to key external trends, market demands, and regulatory changes.
- Ability to guide and mentor others in performing effectively and in providing professional development opportunities.
- Affinity for networking outside and within the organization and the field to build positive strategic relationships to further the COLA strategic plan.
- Ability to address problems and challenges, use critical-thinking in moving beyond the standard methods and solutions, thereby keeping the COLA at the cutting-edge and ahead of the curve.

- Practice life-long learning and be willing to implement new concepts, technologies, and methods.

Compensation

COLA is home to some of the most talented, experienced people found in the lab industry and beyond. From COLA's surveyors in the field to technical support staff at headquarters, COLA team members know they can rely on each other. COLA's culture is one of collaboration and continual improvement. Team members are offered opportunities to participate in employee-led committees, leadership development and training, job shadowing, peer-recognition, flexible scheduling and more. [COLA offers a very attractive compensation to attract the right candidate.](#) COLA also provides its employees with a wide array of comprehensive benefits to help maintain employee welfare and health.

To apply, please send a cover letter and current résumé (Microsoft Word® format preferred) to COLA@smartinsearch.com. *A well-crafted cover letter outlining how your background and experience relate to the position is considered an important part of the candidate review process.* All applications will be acknowledged.

COLA provides equal opportunity to all employees and all applicants for employment without regard to race, color, citizenship status, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, genetic information, age, religion, creed, national origin, ancestry, physical or mental disability, marital status, U.S. military veteran status, political affiliations or any other characteristic protected by law.

For more information, contact:

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