



NEWS & VIEWS

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Advancing Scholarship in Laboratory Medicine

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Update: Activities of the Education and Scientific Affairs Committee

(The following are the minutes of a conference call meeting of NACB's Education and Scientific Affairs Committee held on September 28, 1999.)

The meeting was called to order by Bob Dufour (Chair) at 1:00 p.m. EDT. All members were in attendance (John Chapman, Jay Jones, David Sacks, Ed Sasse, Alan Wu).

1. Report on Status of SOLPs

A. 1998 – Cardiac Markers: Alan Wu reported that the guidelines were published in the July issue of *Clinical Chemistry* and the manuscript for the NACB monograph has been submitted to the publisher.

B. 1999 – Hepatitis: Bob Dufour reported that his Standards of Laboratory Practice committee held a conference call last week to review the comments made by the participants at the SOLP session in July. Final comments are due to him by October 5, with the next draft to be made available to the committee and the BOD by October 12. The next draft will be presented to the AASLD practice guidelines committee on October 22. It is anticipated that two manuscripts will be ready for journal submission by late November or early December - one on laboratory test performance to *Clinical Chemistry* and one on clinical aspects to a

clinical journal (initially *JAMA*). Fundraising has yielded about \$10,000 to date; a second mailing will go out to drug companies and Roche Diagnostics. Two foundations that support education in liver disease, International Hepatitis Foundation and American Liver Foundation, are also being approached about support for the monograph. The only remaining budget expenses will be for one more conference call (possible) and for publication of the monograph.

C. 2000 – Diabetes: David Sacks reported that his committee has had one meeting and one conference call. A proposal for a 1.5 day Edu-Trak has been submitted to AACC. Committee members have been given assignments for the first draft of the guidelines, due to him by November 22. A conference call will be held in mid-December to finalize the first draft, which will then be sent to outside reviewers. A second draft is anticipated to be completed and ready to post on the internet by early March. The committee is trying to arrange some form of presentation of the guidelines at the American Diabetes Association meeting in San Antonio in June, 2000. Issues to be resolved: Could ADA's logo appear on the cover of the monograph? Could some form of the guidelines be published in *Diabetes Care* in its January, 2001 issue (all ADA guidelines are published in January as a supplement to this journal)? Could an



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executive summary of the guidelines be published in *Diabetes Care*, with the full manuscript published in *Clinical Chemistry*? In terms of budget, Dr. Sacks anticipates 4 conference calls needed in 2000. Support will be needed for typing of the manuscript and committee minutes; Dr. Sacks estimates 160-200 hours of clerical support needed.

D. 2001 – Toxicology: Alan Wu reported that he and Shirley Welch will co-chair this session. Other committee members selected and confirmed so far include Tai Kwong (who is also developing guidelines on breath alcohol that will be incorporated into the final guidelines), Larry Broussard, and Charles McKay, an emergency physician and associate director of the Connecticut Poison Control Center. The committee wants to get one more analytical toxicologist, another emergency room physician/clinical toxicologist, and another physician (perhaps a pediatrician or psychiatrist). Dr. Broussard will also be on the planning committee for the Society of Forensic Toxicologists meeting in 2001; an attempt will be made to present the guidelines at this meeting as well as at AACC. The committee anticipates a face-to-face meeting in January or February of 2000, with travel needed for 6-7 people and a total of 7-8 people attending. One or two conference calls are also planned for 2000. No clerical support will be needed.

E. 1998 – Tumor Markers: Bob Dufour updated the committee on the status of the Tumor Marker SOLP. He has recently spoken with both Marty Fleisher and Jim Witliff. Larry was responsible for fundraising and program development. He stated that about \$10,000 had been raised from diagnostics companies to support publication of a monograph, but that no additional fundraising had occurred in the past 18 months. Jim Witliff reported that he has had little cooperation from most speakers in updating their parts of the presentation based on new information or responses from participants. He plans to complete the updates himself, and will send them to Drs. Dufour and Fleisher for review as they are completed, with the final project to be completed by the end of November. The committee was asked its opinion about delaying publication for such an update: a consensus existed that it would be appropriate to make the material up-to-date, since there had been significant changes in the field. The committee was also asked about support for publication of a monograph, since the Treasurer reported that expenses so far for the program had exceeded income by \$17,000. The consensus of the committee was that it was important that the material be published in a journal, if not already published; the committee felt that the costs of publishing this as a monograph should be considered based on promises made to contributors and the cost to the organization. A potential alternative of purchasing reprints and distributing them with the Academy's logo was also suggested.

Advancing Scholarship in Laboratory Medicine

2. "Integrating the Laboratory into the Electronic Medical Record" Program

Jay Jones reported that several organizations (CAP, NCCLS, AACC Management Sciences and Laboratory Informatics divisions, CDC) have given verbal pledges to support the program. Peter Wageman (of the Hospital Informatics Standardization Board) has also verbally promised help from his organization. Several companies have been contacted for financial support and have made verbal commitments; however, no contributions have been received to date.

3. Request for NACB Co-sponsorship of the AACC Toxicology Course

Les Shaw, course director, sent a letter requesting that NACB co-sponsor this course. There would be no financial commitment by NACB. Bob Dufour stated that the course, when held in Cincinnati, had been co-sponsored by AACC and NACB, but that NACB co-sponsorship was dropped over concerns about CME accreditation by AACC. This is no longer an issue. The committee unanimously recommended NACB co-sponsorship.

4. Request for NACB participation in Human Genetics Racial Nomenclature Project

Arden Forrey had requested that NACB consider participating in an effort by the American Society for Human Genetics to represent the laboratorians interest in defining racial or ethnic groups for such purposes as reference ranges. Bob Dufour read a letter to Arden from his outside contact in which the president ASHG felt that this was not in their scope of interest in the project, but would be willing to listen if NACB desired to pursue this topic. The committee unanimously recommended against making an effort in this area.

5. Possible Name Change for SOLPs

Bob Dufour advised the committee that the Board of Directors had requested the committee to consider the advisability of changing the name of the Standards of Laboratory Practice (SOLP) program to another title that did not use the word "standard", perhaps using instead "guideline", which is more widely accepted. One suggestion made to the committee from a BOD member was

"Guidelines on Laboratory Diagnostics" (GOLD). The committee was asked to consider the issue and forward any suggestions to Bob before the next BOD meeting in late October.

6. The meeting was adjourned at 1:50 pm EDT.



International Scholar Program

NACB is proud to announce its continued support for clinical laboratory scientists from countries outside of the USA to visit laboratories in this country and gain practical knowledge in order to better themselves, their institutions, and healthcare in their countries. In the past two years, NACB has sponsored international scholars from India, Jordan, and the Peoples Republic of China. The Board of Directors has committed the resources to continue support for this program. Any NACB member may recommend a colleague for this program. Applicants should request an application for consideration from:

Timothy E. Caragher, Ph.D.
Chair, International Scholar Program
Elmhurst Memorial Hospital
200 Berteau Avenue
Elmhurst, IL 60126 USA
Phone: (630) 993-5167
Fax: (630) 782-7896
TCARAGH@emhs.com

The application should be received no later than six (6) months before the applicant would like to arrive in the USA. A committee will review the application and contact the applicant within two (2) months of receipt of the application.

The International Scholar Program has been generously funded in part by grants from Roche Diagnostics /Boehringer Mannheim Corporation and Beckman Instruments, in addition to funding from the Academy itself. Additional sources of support are desired; members who know of a company or individual that might be interested in making a donation to this worthy cause should contact Timothy Caragher.

President's Corner

Defining Who We Are !

As we approach the beginning of the third counted millennium, we may wish to look for inspiration and try to sort out the "meaning of things" (well, some things anyway). Three items come to mind when I relate this to our professional affiliations such as those with our Academy:



1. Why do we need professional affiliations?
2. What is it these affiliations do for us as individuals?
And most importantly,
3. What is it we as individuals do for the organizations?

The need for professional organizations stems from the principle that, collectively, a group has more "influence" than any one individual. The fact is that it really goes considerably beyond this premise. Two items apply here: one is to put a face to our profession for those outside our profession (aside from personal contact), the other is to define who we are - not just to others, but to ourselves! This last item is key, because it underpins an organization like NACB.

As for the second question, what the organization can do for us, this usually depends very much on how much we contribute to the organization. The more we put in, the more we get out. But this can backfire if the time is not used efficiently or if the organization is not responsive to our needs. Take size, for example. Striking a balance between being too large and out of control and being too small and not effective is a delicate task. This balance is not always obvious and obtaining it is usually best left to "self-determined equilibrium". For example, how does one define being "too large" or "too small", too much bureaucracy, etc.? Consider perhaps the number of individuals in a given organization and then the number who become actively engaged in activities shaping the organization. One would think that as the organization became more exclusive (by this I mean fewer people thinking similarly or with very common goals), then the percentage of active participants (relative to the total number of members) would

be greater. I think this is usually the case.

The third question "what we can do for the organization" is a little trickier, and has been asked before for other socially-oriented endeavors. Its focus leads us to how we define ourselves. Presently, our Board of Directors is grappling with the following two questions: **Why should individuals become Fellows of the Academy?** and **What does it mean to be the Academy of AACC?** These questions take us collectively to higher ground or at least to defining what we should be, would like to be, etc. These questions are particularly important to our Academy at this time because we recently entered into an agreement to be the "official Academy" of one of the largest collective organizations aligned with the profession of laboratory medicine.

I suggest that in answering "why individuals should become Fellows of our Academy" we look closely at what we as individuals can do for the Academy (and not so much what the Academy can do for us). The **Academy of most professions defines the profession and its practice**. So we serve to actively participate in defining those issues. Think of being here because others need you to be here!

The second question above is more mechanistic in that we not only deal with the philosophy but also the nuts and bolts of serving that philosophy. What does it mean for NACB to be the Academy of AACC? This question will be one of the major topics of deliberation at our October BOD meeting in Chicago. For starters, we will have to define what the philosophy behind the relationship should be, then we focus on what "things" can be done to cement and develop the desired relationship. I am confident that with the outstanding BOD members you have elected, we will as a BOD fully develop these concepts. However, I am of strong sentiment that we really do need your personal input to help develop and define these ideas more precisely. Please help your Board do this by informing us how you feel about these issues and with some constructive ideas. For example, what specific activities can our Academy do for our profession or for the AACC that would define the NACB as the Academy of our profession? What things should AACC be asking NACB to oversee, etc.?

Call, e-mail, contact me or other members of your Board anyway you can as soon as possible with your input! Until next time,

My best regards,

Summary of Annual Membership Meeting

The annual general membership meeting was held on July 27, 1999 during the AACC annual meeting in New Orleans. Sixty-eight Fellows attended the combined membership meeting and awards luncheon, where several awards were presented. [Editor's note: see article on awards luncheon elsewhere in this issue].

President Roland Valdes called the membership meeting to order at 1:10 pm. The minutes of the August 5, 1998 membership meeting in Chicago were distributed and approved. This was followed by the President's Report, in which Dr. Valdes presented an overview of the past year's accomplishments. These included presentation of the first SOLP (on Cardiac Markers) to be presented as an Edutrak at the 1998 AACC Annual meeting in Chicago; presentation of the SOLP on Hepatitis as an Edutrak at this meeting; publication of the SOLP guidelines on cardiac markers in the July 1999 issue of *Clinical Chemistry*; publication of the SOLP on Therapeutic Drug Monitoring in March, 1999; reinstatement of the Publications Committee with the appointment of Dr. Robert Elser as chair; stronger staff support from AACC to facilitate the achievement of numerous NACB activities; and finally, discussions with ABCC and ComACC to consider ways to improve partnerships with these organizations.

Dr. Valdes outlined future activities of NACB, including publication of the cardiac marker SOLP monograph in 2000; publication of the hepatitis SOLP as a journal article and monograph; presentation of the diabetes SOLP at the 2000 annual AACC meeting (to be chaired by Dr. David Sacks); conclude planning for the including the NACB logo in CCL; continue to develop the infrastructure of NACB; conduct a drive for new Fellows; and appoint a new Awards Committee chair and members.

This was followed by reports from various committee chairs. Education and Scientific Affairs Committee chair Dr. Robert Dufour reported that Dr. Alan Wu would chair the 2001 SOLP on clinical toxicology and that the 2000 SOLP on Diabetes was being produced in cooperation with the American Diabetes

Association. He also reported that NACB would co-sponsor a meeting with the AACC Lipids and Lipoproteins Division titled "Frontiers in Lipids and Lipoproteins Research" to be held in St. Louis in May 2000. NACB will also co-sponsor a conference with several other organizations on "Integration of Laboratory Information into the Computerized Patient Record" in Philadelphia in September 2000.

Membership and Government Affairs Committees chair Dr. Charles Bradley reported that a new membership brochure had been developed and was available in the NACB booth on the exhibit floor. He also reported that 23 new Fellows had been approved since August 1999. [Several of the new Fellows were in attendance and were introduced by Dr. Valdes.] Dr. Bradley will be stepping down as committee chair and a new chair will be appointed for 2000.

Newsletter co-editor Dr. Sal Sena reported that he and co-editor Dr. Jerry Yeo intend to publish one more newsletter this year for a total of three issues in 1999. Dr. Sena will solicit and edit articles, while Dr. Yeo will handle the layout, printing and mailing. The newsletter has been redesigned by Dr. Yeo; they hope everyone likes the new layout.

Finally, the results of the election were announced. Dr. Michael Lehrer was elected Treasurer for a three-year term beginning January 2000. Drs. Nader Rifai, Robert Dufour, and Roberta Reed were elected to the Nominating Committee, with Dr. Rifai as Chair. The meeting was adjourned at approximately 2:00 pm.

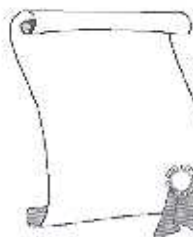
***** ATTENTION *****

Deadlines for next issue of newsletter:

- Copy deadline: January 14, 2000
- Mailing date: January 31, 2000

Send your contributions to Dr. Sal Sena at:
Salvador.Sena@danhosp.org

Awards Presented at Luncheon in New Orleans



The Academy presented several awards at a well attended luncheon held at the New Orleans Hilton Riverside hotel on July 27, 1999.

The NACB Award for Outstanding Research and Contributions in

Clinical Biochemistry was presented to **Leonard B. Seef, M.D.** for his work on Hepatitis C. Dr. Seef is Professor of Medicine at the Georgetown University School of Medicine and Senior Scientist for Hepatitis C at the National Institutes for Diabetes, Digestive and Kidney Diseases at NIH. Dr. Seef was one of the featured speakers in this year's NACB Standards of Laboratory Practice/ AACC Edutrak program devoted to Hepatitis. Dr. Robert Dufour, who organized and chaired the well attended SOLP sessions, presented the award to Dr. Seef.

NACB President Roland Valdes presented the **Professor Alvin Dubin Award for Distinguished Contributions to the Discipline of Clinical Biochemistry** to **Myron Warshaw, Ph.D.** for his tireless efforts on behalf of the discipline and the many contributions he has made to the Academy over the years.

Dr. Valdes also presented a special recognition award to **Nannepaga Zachariah, Ph.D.**, for his many years of service to NACB as Editor of our newsletter, *News and Views*. In addition, awards were presented to **Frank Sedor, Ph.D.** and **Thomas Koch, Ph.D.** for serving as members of NACB's Board of Directors from 1994-1998.

In recognition for his service as Secretary and an officer of NACB from 1994-1998, **Charles Hawker, Ph.D.** received an award in appreciation for his valuable contributions to the Academy, particularly the success it has enjoyed in expanding its influence and increasing its membership.

Finally, Dr. Valdes presented the NACB **President's Award** to Past President **Myron Warshaw, Ph.D.** in recognition for Dr. Warshaw's leadership during his tenure as an officer and President of the Academy. Congratulations to all the awardees!

Upcoming Meetings and Conferences

Frontiers in Lipoprotein & Vascular Disease Research: Basic Science, Analytical, Clinical and Public Health Applications. May 5-7, 2000, Hyatt Regency Hotel at Union Station, St. Louis, MO. Sponsored by the AACC Lipids and Lipoproteins Division in association with the American Heart Association, CDC, and NACB. Contact: Paula Steiner, Medical Research Laboratories, 2 Tesseneer Drive, Highland Heights, KY 41076. Tel: 800-323-2996 (x405), fax: 606-781-9310, e-mail: frontiers@mrl.crl.com.

18th International Symposium. Critical Care Testing in the New Millenium: The Integration of Point-of-Care Testing. June 1-4, 2000, Marienlyst Hotel, Helsingor, Denmark. Under the auspices of the International Federation of Clinical Chemistry, this conference is sponsored by the AACC Critical Care Testing Division (formerly the Electrolyte/Blood Gas Division) and Point-of-Care Testing Division in cooperation with the IFCC Working Group on Selective Electrodes and the Japan Society of Clinical Chemistry (Committee on Blood Gases and Electrolytes). Contact: Ellis Jacobs, Ph.D., Tel: 212-241-3891, Fax: 212-876 0651, e-mail: ellis_jacobs@smtplink.mssm.edu.

NACB Dues Increase

The Board of Directors approved an annual dues increase of \$15.00 (from \$45.00 to 60.00) at its May 22-23, 1999 meeting. The Board felt that this nominal increase was necessary to maintain our financial viability. Administrative costs have increased, as well as those associated with organizing programs such as our SOLPs. In addition, implementation of NACB's strategic plan will require additional capital. All efforts are being made by your Board to manage and utilize our finances wisely. Annual dues have remained static for almost ten years, with no increases to reflect the additional expenses of new programs and other initiatives. The new annual dues of \$60.00 are effective January 1, 2000 and will be reflected in the membership renewal mailing this October.

Highlights from the Joint Summit on Markers in Cardiology (Oct 14-15, 1999)

I had the opportunity and pleasure to attend the recent *Summit on Cardiac Markers* organized by **Jesse Adams, MD** from the Jewish Heart and Lung Institute in Louisville, KY. This two-day conference was sponsored by the University of Louisville School of Medicine and co-sponsored by *The National Academy of Clinical Biochemistry*, *The American Association of Clinical Chemistry*, *The American Heart Association*, and *The American College of Emergency Physicians*. The industry sponsors were: Biosite, Pharmacia & Upjohn, Eli Lilly and Company, Spectral Diagnostics, Roche Diagnostics, Ortho-Clinical Diagnostics, Dade Behring, and Cor Therapeutics. There were approximately 150 participants from nations all over the world, including USA, Canada, Germany, Singapore, and Turkey. Distinguished faculty members hailed from Germany, Austria, USA, and The Netherlands. Overall, there a nice mix of cardiologists, laboratorians, emergency physicians, and vendors of cardiac markers.

Renowned cardiologist, **Dr. Allan Jaffe** (a proponent of cardiac troponins utility), began the session by reviewing the importance of low, abnormal levels of cardiac troponins in risk stratification of patients with acute coronary syndrome. He emphasized that vendors of cTnI assays need to get serious about improving precision at the low cutoff values of their assays, since anecdotes of analytical errors at these levels are causing clinicians to develop a distaste for and a mistrust of this valuable cardiac-specific marker of myocardial damage. **Dr. Jesse Adams**, another prominent cardiologist, lectured on the superiority of cardiac troponins for diagnosing perioperative MI in patients undergoing cardiac or noncardiac surgery. It was really encouraging to hear these internationally-known cardiologists prominently highlighting the recent NACB recommendations for the use of cardiac markers in coronary artery diseases. It was also an honor to our Academy that two of the invited speakers are NACB members: **Dr. Roland Valdes** (our current President), and **Alan Wu**. Dr. Wu touched on several analytical aspects of cTnI assays, which included the lack of standardiza-

tion of different assays as well as projections for a neural-network approach to the prognosis and diagnosis of cardiac disease. Dr. Apple discussed the analytical issues surrounding the use of cTnI in hemodialysis patients. He also mentioned a current clinical study in progress involving end-stage renal patients, which will address the question of the prognostic value of elevated troponins (especially cTnT) in this population. Dr. Valdes provided an excellent overview of the recent emergence of point-of-care cardiac troponin devices (both qualitative and quantitative) that have a role in the ED in triaging patients with chest pain. New potential markers of plaque rupture and CAD were discussed by various speakers, and include oxidized LDL, malondialdehyde modified LDL, asymmetric dimethylarginine, and nuclear factor- κ B.

Just in case you were wondering, the summit was not "all work and no play." On the first evening, we were treated to a superb, informal dinner at the famous Kentucky Derby Museum at Churchill Downs to country and western musical entertainment, and to a guided tour of the Kentucky Derby race-course, which concluded with a multimedia show. On the last evening, a reception was generously provided by Dr. Roland Valdes and held at the **Valdes Home**, a 30-acre mansion about one hour ride from downtown Louisville. (Roland must have done something *very right* in his career). Again all of us had a terrific time, mingling with different participants and speakers from all over the world. Kudos to the Valdes family for being such gracious hosts! Overall, I had a good time at this conference, and I highly recommend that you plan to attend next year's Summit on Cardiac Markers.

*From the Editor,
Jerry Yeo*



Dinner Reception at the Valdes Home

Election Results

The following are the results of the 1999 NACB election:

Treasurer (2000-2002): Michael Lehrer, Ph.D.

Nominating Committee (2000-2001)*: D. Robert Dufour, M.D.

Roberta Reed, Ph.D.

Nader Rifai, Ph.D.**

*These three elected individuals will join the three holdover members to form the Nominating Committee for 2000 which includes Larry Kaplan, Ph.D. (Chair), John Chapman, Ph.D. and Robert Murray, Ph.D.

**Dr. Rifai received the most votes and will serve as Chair in 2001.

Board of Directors: No election was held for members-at-large of the Board of Directors. Per the Bylaws change enacted in 1998, the Board will decrease at the end of 1999 from eight members elected for 4 years each (plus five officers) to six members elected for three years each, decreasing the total number of Board members from 13 to 11.

Congratulations to those who were elected. Thanks to everyone who agreed to stand for election and to all members who voted in the election.



NEWS & VIEWS

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