



NEWS & VIEWS

DECEMBER 2007

Advancing Scholarship in Laboratory Medicine

3	MISCELLANEOUS ANNOUNCEMENTS
3	SECRETARY'S REPORT
4	NIH ESTABLISHES UC DAVIS-LLNL CENTER FOR POINT-OF-CARE TECHNOLOGIES
4	NACB GUIDELINES TO BE TRANSLATED IN RUSSIAN
4	LAB TESTS ONLINE TO RECEIVE AESCULAPIUS AWARD



PRESIDENT'S CORNER

It is difficult to believe that my term will end in just a few weeks. It has been an honor and a privilege to serve as the Academy's president. And in this final report, there are a number of individuals I must recognize, for without their guidance and contributions, this year would not have been such a pleasure! First, I owe a great deal of thanks to a tremendous board. This group of fellows willingly gave personal time to sit in small conference rooms to hash out budgets, policies, revise bylaws and the like. To reduce costs, we often piggyback meetings onto other meetings and have meals brought in rather than going out. This Board also set the precedence of handling a significant amount of business electronically via email throughout the year. I appreciate their time, their thoughtfulness, and their diligence. I also thank all of you who volunteered to serve on our committees – over the years we have streamlined our committee structure retaining those critical to the organization. Volunteer contributions are extremely valuable. Last, but not least, the Academy is fortunate to have a strong executive director in Penny Jones. For many years Ms Jones and Patty Brady have served as the Academy's staff, splitting time with many other responsibilities. Recognizing the need for greater support – particularly with the LMPGs and other projects – the Board recommended and approved the addition of another support person last fall. I'm sad to report Michael Turner left after just a few short, but productive, months. He brought enthusiasm and fresh ideas and I know many of you enjoyed meeting him in San Diego. But our loss is a tremendous opportunity for

him as he was given a book contract of a lifetime! We wish him success! As a result, we take this opportunity to welcome Betsy Garman. Several of the LMPG committees have already discovered Ms Garman's attention to detail and ability to assist in the resolution of problems.

The Newborn Screening LMPG committee published and presented the first draft of their recommendations. Given the narrow audience of this topic and the competition from other strong symposia, I was glad to see their session relatively well attended. Remember the open comment period will close December 31, so you have just a few more weeks in which to comment during this initial round. Please remind your colleagues in peds metabolism to participate as well. We have implemented a tracking system for recording and documenting comments along with the committee's disposition of the comments. I think it is very important to recognize that they have been invited to present their recommendations at the meeting of the Pediatric Academic Societies – no doubt this venue will allow additional input.

The meeting in San Diego was full but there were four events I want to highlight. The Distinguished Abstracts were again a great success. In addition, six of the abstracts were selected for oral presentation. Tom Annesley graciously agreed to moderate the session. Despite a modest attendance, the session was considered a successful start; and as a result, we have been asked to expand the number of oral presentations for the 2008 meeting. These will again be selected from those receiving distinction, so keep this in mind when preparing your abstracts next month! I'd like to thank all of you who participated in the Fun Run/ Walk. There were plenty of blue

Continued on page 2

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sweatbands in the crowd thanks to a great idea by Dr. Larry Broussard and orchestration by Ms. Jones! My favorite point was when one Academy fellow walked up to the registration desk and announced that he was there to run on the NACB TEAM! I also want to let you know that I represented the Academy in a meeting between the AACC and IFCC leadership. This was the first time an Academy president joined this meeting. One hundred twenty-two members and guests attended the awards ceremony at which we introduced twenty-three new fellows and recognized the fellows who have made the LMPG program such a tremendous success by serving as committee chairs. It was particularly good to see Dr. Larry Kaplan at the program – he has focused on other activities since his retirement. I had hoped he couldn't resist attending to see the LMPGs recognized – and he couldn't! The budget-centered discussion that followed in the membership meeting was healthy – it is particularly important to have such discussions as the merger with AACC proceeds. While many aspects of this continue to evolve, one thing is very clear to me as your president and as an AACC board member: the AACC leadership is strongly committed to the success of this endeavor, as well as to the success of our programs!

I do want to clear a rumor heard afterwards that membership criteria was going to be relaxed – in contrast to that rumor, there are no such plans. Having said that, I will report that at the request of the Membership Committee, the Board reviewed the criteria for all membership categories at our recent meeting and approved several changes that, if anything, strengthens criteria and clarifies the types of activities and evidence that should be submitted by candidates.

Another important event of note occurred mid-November in Atlanta

Continued on page 3

President's Corner – continued from page 2

where over 120 attended the 28th Arnold Beckman Conference to hear Dr. David Sacks and the members of his LMPG committee present their updates to the Diabetes Guidelines. You may have realized that the Beckman Conference is no longer held on an annual basis; and while 2007 was to have been an “off” year, because of the success of the previous two Beckman-LMPG collaborations and our need to meet certain deadlines, the AACC and the Academy agreed to alter the schedule so that the conference could again be used in this capacity. The presentations were excellent and the exchanges that followed were stimulating – the committee was given quite a bit to think about. I understand the committee will have the grading completed soon. My only regret is that we did not foresee the strength of some of the presentations and discussions. This would have been a great program to have broadcasted through the web or some other means. I hope this will be a possibility in the future.

Thank you again for your support and help in making this a successful year for the Academy – I’m looking forward to an equally great year under the leadership of Dr. Sue Evans!

CATHERINE HAMMETT-STABLER,
PHD, DABCC, FACB
President

MISCELLANEOUS ANNOUNCEMENTS

- Expanded Newborn Screening guidelines are now open for public comment until 12/31/2007 at http://www.aacc.org/AACC/members/nacb/LMPG/OnlineGuide/DraftGuidelines/EN_Metabolic_Disease/
- The Diabetes guidelines update was presented at the Arnold O. Beckman Conference on November 15-16 in Atlanta. You can view the presentations from this meeting at: http://www.aacc.org/AACC/events/meeting_proceeding/
- The membership approved changes to the NACB bylaws in July 2007. The updated bylaws can be viewed at <http://www.aacc.org/AACC/members/nacb/Governance/Bylaws/>

NOVEMBER 16-17, 2007 NATIONAL ACADEMY OF CLINICAL BIOCHEMISTRY BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

We held our fall 2007 Board of Directors meeting in conjunction with the Beckman Conference on updated Guidelines and Recommendations for Laboratory Analysis in the Diagnosis and Management of Diabetes Mellitus. This was a superb conference that was well attended. There was excellent interactive participation from leading physicians and scientists in the field and the depth of the discussion was very encouraging to the Board and our Education and Scientific Affairs Committee (ESAC) members in attendance. Since these conferences enhance the interaction between laboratory professionals and clinicians in various fields, and the Academy is actively involved in the dissemination of laboratory medicine practice guidelines (LMPGs), involvement with the Beckman Conference is an appropriate scholarly activity for the NACB. The Board also feels that LMPGs provide a good teaching tool and can be used as a venue for laboratorians to interact with clinicians and other patient care professionals at their institutions. One of the topics for the Board Meeting, now that the merger with AACC is complete, was the review of the status of several specific LMPGs comprising some of our most significant activities. In addition to the Diabetes update, draft guidelines for Expanded Newborn screening have been posted on the NACB website. The NACB will also be moderating a half day symposium at the 2008 national meeting that will discuss how guidelines are developed. In addition to the discussion of LMPGs, the board also had a philosophical discussion of the vision of the Academy. In this regard, it was felt that the NACB should be different but complementary to the AACC, in areas such as the advancement of clinical practice (i.e. LMPGs) and how the academy promotes quality in the field Clinical Chemistry (e.g. through education).

JOHN PETERSEN, PHD, FACB, DABCC
NACB Secretary, 2007

NIH ESTABLISHES UC DAVIS-LLNL CENTER FOR POINT-OF-CARE TECHNOLOGIES

Adapted from News Release at
https://publicaffairs.llnl.gov/news/news_releases/2007/NR-07-11-06.html
by Alex J. Rai

A five year, \$8.5 million grant that focuses on point-of-care testing has recently been awarded to a team of doctors, scientists, and engineers from UC Davis Health System and Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory (LLNL). The grant is from the National Institute of Biomedical Imaging and Bioengineering (NIBIB), a part of the National Institutes of Health (NIH), to develop two prototype instruments able to detect five bacterial and fungal pathogens. In addition, the team will evaluate other technologies that will assist our nation to be prepared for future disasters.

The importance of POCT was realized during Hurricane Katrina, when rescue & treatment was delayed, hospitals were not fully operational, and doctors didn't have adequate tools to make fast diagnoses. In addition, instruments that were in use were not able to withstand the environmental stresses during the disaster.

"Research is needed to develop field-worthy, battery operated devices robust enough to withstand extreme ranges of humidity, temperature, and altitude encountered during rescue operations," says Gerald Kost, MD, PhD, professor of Pathology and Laboratory Medicine and director of the POCT-CTR at UC Davis Health System. He adds, "The goal of our center is to improve the accessibility, portability, and field robustness of POC instruments for critical emergency disaster care in community hospitals, rural areas, and disaster response sites."

The LLNL-UC Davis team will develop two prototype instruments- one for hospital settings and one that is portable for field operation. Among other things, the UC Davis researchers will assist with instrument design, evaluation of test prototypes, solicit input and feedback from users, educate health care teams and train rescue workers. The LLNL Pathogen

Informatics group will assist with design of DNA signatures for use with the new instruments, which utilize a DNA amplification technique called loop mediated amplification (LAMP) instead of the traditional polymerase chain reaction (PCR). These unique fingerprints will be used in the detection of several clinically significant pathogens including: methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus*, *Pseudomonas aeruginosa*, *Escherichia coli*, *Streptococcus pneumoniae*, and *Candida*.

For additional information, see the News Release at: https://publicaffairs.llnl.gov/news/news_releases/2007/NR-07-11-06.html

NACB GUIDELINES TO BE TRANSLATED IN RUSSIAN

The Russian Association of Medical Laboratory Diagnostics (RAMLD) along with Russian laboratory scientists have expressed interest in translating two of the existing NACB guidelines into the Russian language- "Biomarkers of acute coronary syndrome (ACS)" and "Point-of-care Testing". They will be published in the coming months in the popular Russian medical journal *Terra Medica* (<http://www.terramedica.spb.ru>). Be on the lookout for these upcoming issues!

LAB TESTS ONLINE TO RECEIVE AESCULAPIUS AWARD

The Health Improvement Institute has recognized Lab Tests Online with its Aesculapius Award of Excellence for health-related websites. The full story can be found at:

<http://labtestsonline.org/members/news/071207aesculapius.html>

Congratulations to all those involved who have given their time and hard work to make LabTests Online a success!