



## Advancing Scholarship in Laboratory Medicine

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### PRESIDENT'S CORNER

As I write this, it is late March. I'm excited that opening day of the major league baseball season is less than two weeks away and that almost all of my NCAA men's basketball picks made the 'Sweet Sixteen.' Coupled with that energy is my enthusiasm for the ongoing activities of the NACB. The first few months of the NACB presidency have been busy ones. After a long, hard winter, we're all recognizing it's no longer business as usual and that there's a new 'sheriff in town' in the White House. Healthcare is challenged by the past year's economic downturn as much as any industry in the U.S. I'm particularly thankful for each one of you who is a NACB fellow and for those individuals who give their precious time and effort to work on behalf of the Academy.

Academy leadership is looking into new areas of activities and reassessing long-standing practices. But there are many issues to update that are familiar ones. NACB's capable Awards Committee, chaired by Loralie Langman, started working early this year to make their selections and I was privileged to be able to notify each of them. My congratulations go to David Sacks, recipient of the 2009 Distinguished Scientist Award; Mary Burritt, recipient of the 2009 Alvin Dubin Award; and Chris McCudden, recipient of the 2009 George Grannis Award. At the upcoming AACC annual meeting in Chicago, these deserving colleagues will

be recognized before the Plenary Session on Tuesday morning, July 21st, and at the NACB Awards luncheon on Wednesday, July 22nd.

Other important 2009 AACC AM programs that are sponsored by NACB is the selection of NACB Distinguished Abstracts as well as the presentation of selected abstracts from that group for oral presentation. Poster sessions are scheduled as usual by topic at selected times from Tuesday, July 21st through Thursday, July 23rd with those posters recognized in NACB's Distinguished Abstracts program identified by a blue ribbon. The NACB Distinguished Abstract Oral Presentations are scheduled for Tuesday, July 21, 2:30—5:00pm, McCormick Place Convention Center. Loralie Langman and the NACB Awards Committee members are responsible for overseeing these programs in addition to the awards program. My thanks go to each of them for their efforts on behalf of the Academy and our profession.

At the AACC AM, a symposium on LMPG Guidelines for Laboratory Analysis in Diabetes (34202), being developed in cooperation with NACB, will be presented on Wednesday, July 22, 2:30—5pm, McCormick Place Convention Center. Also at the AM, NACB is represented by Gary Myers in a Full Day Chair's Invited Session: Beyond Lipids—Lipoproteins and Inflammatory Markers for Cardiovascular Risk Assessment (64301). This session is developed in cooperation with NACB, CDC and LVDD. July 22, 10:30—12 noon and 2:30pm—5:00pm in the McCormick Place Convention Center. Please make sure to confirm this information in the final AACC AM program. When one considers all the different activities

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**NATIONAL ACADEMY OF CLINICAL BIOCHEMISTRY**  
**OFFICERS AND BOARD OF DIRECTORS – 2009**

**PRESIDENT**

Stephen E. Kahn, PhD, DABCC, FACB  
Loyola University Medical Center  
Pathology & Cell Biology/Laboratory Med  
2160 South First Avenue  
Room 0122, Clinical Laboratories  
Maywood, IL 60153-3304  
708-216-4725  
708-216-1639 (fax)  
skahn@lunc.edu

**PRESIDENT-ELECT**

Robert Murray, PhD, JD, DABCC, FACB  
Midwest Diagnostic Pathology  
Pathology  
1775 Dempster Street  
Park Ridge, IL 60068-1173  
847-723-6174  
robert.murray@advocatehealth.com

**PAST PRESIDENT**

Susan A. Evans, PhD, FACB  
Agencourt Bioscience Corporation  
500 Cummings Center  
Suite 2450  
Beverly, MA 01915  
978-867-2637  
sueevans@att.net  
susan.evans@agencourt.com

**SECRETARY**

John R. Petersen, PhD, DABCC, FACB  
University of Texas Medical Branch Hospitals  
Pathology  
301 University Blvd.  
Room 5, 156 JSA  
Galveston, TX 77555-0551  
409-772-1350  
409-772-9245 (fax)  
jrpeters@utmb.edu

**TREASURER**

Kenneth E. Blick, PhD, DABCC, FACB  
University of Oklahoma  
Department of Pathology  
PO Box 26307-Room EB400  
800 NE 13th Street  
Oklahoma City, OK 73104-5006  
405-271-7632  
405-271-1651 (fax)  
ken-blick@ouhsc.edu

**DIRECTORS**

**2007-2009**

Stanley Lo, PhD, DABCC, FACB  
Children's Hospital of Wisconsin  
Department of Pathology/MS701  
9000 West Wisconsin Avenue  
PO Box 1997  
Milwaukee, WI 53266-3518  
414-266-2508  
414-266-2779 (fax)  
stanlo@mcw.edu

Salvador F. Sena, PhD, DABCC, FACB  
Danbury Hospital  
Laboratory Medicine  
24 Hospital Avenue  
2 Tower—Laboratory  
Danbury, CT 06810-6077  
203-739-7622  
203-739-8707 (fax)  
Salvador.sena@danhosp.org

**DIRECTORS**

**2008-2010**

Lori Sokoll, PhD, FACB  
Johns Hopkins Medical Institutions  
Pathology  
600 N. Wolfe Street  
Meyer B-125  
Baltimore, MD 21287-0001  
410-955-2673  
410-614-7609  
lsokoll@jhmi.edu

William Winter, MD, DABCC, FACB  
University of Florida  
Pathology, Immunology & Laboratory Medicine  
1600 SW Archer Road  
Box 100275  
Gainesville, FL 32610-0275  
352-846-2149  
winter@pathology.ufl.edu

**DIRECTORS**

**2009-2011**

Gary Myers, PhD, FACB  
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention  
Division of Laboratory Sciences  
4770 Buford Highway NE  
Mailstop F25  
Atlanta, GA 30341-3717  
770-488-4606  
glm1@cdc.gov

Patricia Jones, PhD, DABCC, FACB  
Children's Medical Center  
Pathology  
1935 Medical District Drive  
Dallas, TX 75235  
214-456-6147  
patti.jones@childrens.com

**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**

Penelope Jones  
NACB  
1850 K Street, NW, Suite 625  
Washington, DC 20006  
202-835-8746  
202-833-4576 (fax)  
pjones@aacc.org

The policy of the NACB is that only the President, President-Elect, Secretary, and Treasurer may make official statements on behalf of the NACB. This limitation does not apply to the conduct of routine business transactions. All views expressed in the newsletter are solely those of the contributors, authors, or editors and not necessarily those of the NACB.

**TREASURER'S REPORT**

Dr. Stephen Kahn began the year by appointing a new Finance Committee January 23, 2009 to be chaired by the NACB Treasurer, Kenneth Blick, Ph.D.. Members appointed include Carolyn Feldkamp, Ph.D., Ann Gronowski, Ph.D., Robert Murray, Ph.D., and Larry Broussard, Ph.D. On February 11, 2009 a request was made by Dr. Kahn that the Finance Committee consider a budget variance in order to support increases in the honorarium amounts given to this year's NACB award winners. This change was to bring the award amounts to levels comparable with those given to AACC awardees. The Finance Committee voted 4 in favor of the variance with one member not voting; hence the budget variance was approved.

The proposed 2009 budget worksheet as of 12/22/2008 shows income of \$42,700 with itemized expenses amounting to \$64,550. This nets out to a proposed budget deficit of \$21,850 for 2009. When AACC personnel and occupancy expenses of \$69,617 are added to the budget, this deficit expands to \$91,467. The Treasurer and Finance Committee will continue to review various aspects of this 2009 budget.

Respectfully submitted,

KENNETH E. BLICK, Ph.D.,  
ACS, DABCC, FACB



## *Advancing Scholarship in Laboratory Medicine*

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that involve NACB at the upcoming AACC AM, the Academy will once again be an active and visible group at this conference. If you're able to go to the AACC AM, I hope you'll be able to participate in each Academy activity that I've described.

Speaking of LMPG's, this is a unique area of Academy focus that deserves special mention. In addition to Gary Myers' LMPG on Emerging Biomarkers of Cardiovascular Disease and Stroke being finalized, the preamble to this LMPG was published in the February 2009 *Clinical Chemistry*. Another LMPG recently finalized by a committee chaired by Mike Bennett was Follow-Up Testing for Metabolic Diseases Identified by Expanded Newborn Screening Using Tandem Mass Spectrometry. An additional LMPG, chaired by Catherine Sturgeon, has been published in part, as Use of Tumor Markers in Clinical Practice: Quality Requirements. During 2009, it is expected that the final versions of the Pharmacogenetics LMPG, committee chaired by Roland Valdes, and the Laboratory Analysis in Diabetes, committee chaired by David Sacks, will be available. I wish to thank the chairs and members of each LMPG committee as well as the outstanding staff who support their efforts, particularly Betsy Garman.

Significant amounts of time and work typically go into developing LMPG's. This can be a lengthy and somewhat thankless task. NACB is formally exploring opportunities for support of evidence gathering and compilation from the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ) and the Institute of Medicine (IOM). Additionally, the Academy's Board of Directors will continue to review how we might improve, upgrade and streamline the LMPG development process. At our next board meeting, Shirley Welch, chair of NACB's Education and Scientific Affairs committee, and Rob Christenson, chair of AACC's Evidence-Based Medicine committee, will meet with our board to further address these questions.

Academy leaders believe this is the time to reevaluate how NACB develops guidelines and to identify opportunities for improving our processes. This is based, in part, on results of the 2008 NACB

survey on guideline utilization. Survey results indicated there could also be opportunities for improvement in implementing and applying LMPG's and other clinical practice guidelines. It's worth looking to see if NACB can do anything differently that might better focus, enhance and target the key recommendations from guidelines to optimize the quality of laboratory testing and improve patient care in more impactful ways. This could suggest different categories of educational products derived from LMPG development as well as more diverse mechanisms for delivering the information to LMPG users. While the format of LMPG recommendations may conform to those of a clinical society collaborator, it may also be time for NACB to develop a uniform format for guideline recommendations when a LMPG committee is working independently. These are all guideline issues the NACB BOD has been considering and will continue to explore.

In my years on the NACB BOD, the Academy has effectively addressed many of the most important areas of laboratory practice. At our past BOD meeting, board members agreed NACB should also become a member of the National Quality Forum to determine if there are additional ways that the Academy could contribute to the transformation of American healthcare. If we are going to continue to fulfill our mission that, in part, includes advancing clinical practice through promoting improvement in patient care, we have to be engaged in the existing opportunities for the Academy in the current practice environment. Several groups are engaged in looking at available evidence for best practices in laboratory medicine and determining how these may be applied to improve patient care. NACB board members, Executive Director Penny Jones and I will all continue to work towards the Academy playing a major role in these efforts.

Thank you for your participation in and support of the Academy. I look forward to seeing you at the NACB Awards luncheon or other times during the AACC AM in Chicago this summer.

STEPHEN E. KAHN, Ph.D., DABCC, FACB  
*President*

**REPORT ON THE ASSOCIATION OF CLINICAL BIOCHEMISTS OF INDIA  
NATIONAL CONFERENCE 2008**

CATHERINE HAMMETT-STABLER

During my year as the Academy's President, the Association of Clinical Biochemists of India (ACBI) extended invitations to the AACC and the NACB, as the Academy of AACC, to their 2008 national conference (ACBICON). Unfortunately due to logistical conflicts, Larry Broussard (then President-elect) and I were unable to attend, and so we were pleased when the 2009 executive committee re-extended the invitation to the 2009 35th national conference and we were able to accept. Given this was the first such collaborative effort, we felt it important to coordinate our presentations. It seemed natural that since each of us are active in TDM and toxicology and had worked on the two laboratory medicine practice guidelines related to drug testing, that we focus on these topics. A plan thus evolved in which we proposed that AACC President Broussard would present a talk based on the NACB Laboratory Medicine Practice Guidelines *Recommendations for the Use of Laboratory Tests to Support Poisoned Patients Who Present to the Emergency Department* while I would cover the *Guidelines for Therapeutic Drug Monitoring Services*. Additionally, NACB Fellow Amitava Dasgupta, who was also attending the meeting and was involved in its organization, would round out the discussions by presenting information regarding the analytical and pharmacological interferences that impact drug testing results.

And so while most were doing last minute Christmas shopping, Dr. Broussard and I found ourselves flying to Kolkata. We "lost" a day traveling to India, leaving on December 15 and arriving in the wee hours of December 17th. The drive to Vedic Village, the resort meeting site outside the city, was an adventure, to say the least, as we were traveling opposite of a surprising amount of traffic heading to markets in town on a narrow road. Traffic, by the way, was a combination of trucks, cars, buses, rickshaws, bicycles, and people on foot!

After a (very) short nap, we left for the city where Dr. Broussard gave welcoming remarks to those attending a satellite review course at the Ramakrishna Mission Seva Pratishthan Hospital and the Vivekananda Institute of Medical Sciences. There were 50 in attendance for this course. We returned the next day, again to give welcoming remarks – this time by me. We enjoyed these sessions as they gave us a chance to meet many of the ACBI members, students, and the organizers of the sessions. Our hosts had graciously and thoughtfully arranged for transportation and a guide to show us some of the highlights of the city and region. We visited Mother Theresa's home, Victoria Memorial, several Hindu temples, and were shown many more important modern and historical sites. The area is one of extreme contrasts and home to more than 10 million.

We were most grateful for the time and arrangements as once the formal meeting began on Friday, there was little time for anything else. You may have noticed that the meeting fell on the heels of the bombings in Mumbai – and not surprising, several speakers decided not to attend. Just prior to our departures, each of us was asked to give additional presentations. I gave the opening keynote address, *Weathering the Economic Downturn by Focusing on QM and Patient Safety*, in which I discussed some of the Lean and Six Sigma activities we are using at UNC and how the activities are helping us economically. Dr. Broussard delivered a special lecture entitled *Survival and Recovery of the Laboratory from Disasters: Lessons learned from Hurricane Katrina* based on LSU's experiences during and after this event. All of our presentations were given special recognition and were very well attended. For example, Dr. Broussard's presentation regarding the emergency toxicology guidelines, *Current Trends in Drugs of Abuse Testing*, was recognized as the Dr. T.N.

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Pattabiraman Oration. In addition, the Academy provided copies of the TDM Guidelines. These types of materials are not readily available in some of the more remote areas, and several clinical biochemists and students expressed deep appreciation.

All three of us were busy throughout the meeting serving as moderators, making award presentations, and talking to numerous attendees. One of our most favorite activities took place during breaks and lunches when we had opportunities to meet many students. The students spanned all training levels, from undergraduate through post-doctoral, and had an equally broad range of questions. An interesting feature was that the vendor exhibit hall was not indoors, but rather outside, under large tents! This gave quite a different experience compared to a walk through the exhibits at our annual meeting!

The evenings were equally full, as well, with social events lasting long after jet lag caught up with the USA contingency sending us to our rooms. I would be remiss if I didn't also mention that another of our sister organizations, the *International Association of Therapeutic Drug Monitoring and Clinical Toxicology*, was well represented by Drs. Mike Oellerich from the Georg-August-Universität in Göttingen, Germany and David Holt of the United Kingdom. Many of you may realize the five of us are members of the AACC Therapeutic Drug Monitoring and Toxicology Division. As usual, it seemed we were each wearing multiple hats!

As we were preparing to leave for the airport, we were told that our safety was of highest concern and that the organizers had provided daily written reports to the USA Embassy regarding our whereabouts. Furthermore, our movements had been tracked by GPS chips in our meeting badges! (If only we'd known – there were many times when we left them in our rooms!) Our hosts could not have been more gracious and attentive – we felt safe, secure and found the meeting excellent. Most importantly, I think that by every measure, this first cooperative venture in a major international meeting between the AACC and NACB was quite successful and I am hopeful that these collaborations continue.

See Photos on page 7

## ESAC Update

Several LMPGs have been approved and are now (or will be soon) posted on the website in final form.

- **Tumor Markers** Chapter 2: Use of Tumor Markers in Testicular, Prostate, Colorectal, Breast, and Ovarian Cancers, was published on-line in the December issue of *Clinical Chemistry*
- **Emerging CV Risk Factors** The LMPG has been approved and the Preamble and a summary of the recommendations were published in the February issue of *Clinical Chemistry*.
- **Pharmacogenomics** Is in the final stages of review by ESAC and the NACB Board of Directors.
- **Diabetes** An update on the Diabetes Guidelines, moderated by Dr. David Sacks will be presented at the Annual Meeting in Chicago.

Over the past year or so, there has been much discussion about revising the process for LMPG development and review. This will be a major topic at the upcoming NACB Board meeting.

## LMPG UPDATE: Two New LMPGs Now Online

Two LMPGs were recently completed and published on the NACB web site — *Follow-Up Testing for Metabolic Diseases Identified by Expanded Newborn Screening Using Tandem Mass Spectrometry* edited by Michael J. Bennett and *Use of Tumor Markers in Clinical Practice: Quality Requirements* edited by Catherine Sturgeon and Eleftherios P. Diamandis. The summary of the Tumor Marker Quality Requirements LMPG was published in *Clinical Chemistry* in August.

## **NACB ACTIVITIES AT THE 2009 AACC ANNUAL MEETING**

**Tuesday, July 21**

2:30pm—5:00pm

**Oral Presentations of Selected NACB  
Distinguished Abstracts**

McCormick Place Convention Center

**Tuesday—Thursday, July 21–23**

**NACB Distinguished Abstracts**

McCormick Place Convention Center,  
Exhibit Hall, Posters

Look for the blue ribbons!

**Wednesday, July 22**

10:30am—12noon and 2:30pm—5:00pm

**Chair's Invited Session: Beyond Lipids-  
Lipoproteins and Inflammatory Markers for  
Cardiovascular Risk Assessment 64301**

Developed in cooperation with NACB, CDC,  
and LVDD

McCormick Place Convention Center

12:30pm—2:15pm

**NACB Awards Luncheon and  
Membership Meeting**

Fairmont Hotel

NACB members are invited to attend this luncheon  
in honor of new Academy Fellows and recipients of  
the following awards:

**Distinguished Scientist Award**

**Professor Alvin Dubin Award**

**George Grannis Award**

For the 2009 awardees, please see NACB  
Award Winners, in this issue.

**Wednesday, July 22**

2:30pm – 5:00pm

**LMPG Guidelines for Laboratory Analysis  
in Diabetes 34202**

McCormick Place Convention Center

## **NACB 2009 AWARD WINNERS**

Through its annual awards program, NACB, the Academy of AACC, celebrates the achievements of colleagues who have made significant contributions through scholarship and service to the profession. Chaired by Dr. Loralie Langman, the NACB Awards Committee wishes to thank the sponsors of these awards and to congratulate the 2009 Academy award winners.

**NACB Distinguished Scientist Award  
For Outstanding Research Advances in the  
Field of Clinical Biochemistry**

*Sponsored by Siemens Health Care Diagnostic, Inc.  
David Sacks*

**NACB Alvin Dublin Award  
For Outstanding Contributions to the Profession  
and the Academy**

*Sponsored by Abbott Diagnostics  
Mary Burritt*

**NACB George Grannis Award  
For Excellence in Research and  
Scientific Publication**

*Sponsored by NACB with support from the AACC  
Ohio Valley Section  
Christopher McCudden*

### **Is Your NACB JOIN DATE CORRECT?**

The next time you check your record in the AACC membership directory, take a look at the date listed for joining NACB. If it's incorrect, send a copy of your NACB membership certificate, showing the correct date, to Penelope Jones at [pjones@aacc.org](mailto:pjones@aacc.org) or 202-833-4576 (fax) and she'll update your record.

## *Advancing Scholarship in Laboratory Medicine*



*AACC President Larry Broussard and NACB Past President Catherine Hammett-Stabler were guest speakers at the ACBICON meeting in Kolkata, India in December 2008.*



*Dr. Catherine Hammett-Stabler gives the keynote address at the ACBICON meeting.*