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10 August 2020

Dear Academy Fellows:

It is my great honor to serve as Academy President and Chair of the Academy Council from August 1, 2020 through the AACC Annual Scientific Meeting in 2021.

2020 has been an extraordinary year with COVID-19 profoundly affecting our lives and professional responsibilities. Clinical laboratorians have been playing a critical role in fighting the pandemic by implementing molecular and serological SARS-CoV-2 testing in most clinical laboratories at exceptional speed and increasing testing capacities ever since. COVID-19 has been a major challenge but also a unique opportunity for us because it brought laboratory medicine and the diagnostic profession into focus nationally and internationally. We are in the news much more than before and it is a momentum we should take advantage of by demonstrating the impact of laboratory diagnostics, not only in COVID, but in all other diseases and conditions. The pandemic also brings new opportunities to the Academy. We are at crossroads, where laboratory medicine and diagnostic disciplines in general have a tremendous opportunity to transform medicine as we move from a fee-for-service to a patient-centered, value-based health care system. As President of the Academy, I will encourage the development of economic benchmarks on the value of laboratory diagnostics in patient care.

In spite of the unexpected and extraordinary pressures of the pandemic, the Academy and its fellows have been doing a remarkable job and look forward to our continued success in 2020 and 2021. Implementation of projects to support AACC's Strategic Plan is underway, supporting the expansion of AACC's global brand positioning, increasing of the Association's offerings, and promoting and integrating the latest health-related scientific advancements into Academy projects. The Academy's ongoing programs underscore the special value of laboratory medicine in health care.

In 2020, the Academy released two pivotal guidance documents on Biotin Interference and the Management of Point-of-Care Testing. Since January 2020, 17 Scientific Shorts have been published, under the leadership of the Scientific Shorts Editorial Board, chaired by Dr. Christine Snozek. Shorts continue to be published biweekly, offering insight on the newest developments in laboratory medicine.

The Academy also continues its effort toward guiding laboratory test utilization. AACC's Academy and Science and Practice Core Committee (SPCC) have developed a test utilization resource focusing on commonly misused tests in hospitals and clinics. Academy fellows have provided guidance on 13 different tests to be included in the launch of Optimal Testing: AACC's Guide to Lab Test Utilization. A joint Test Utilization Taskforce between the Academy and SPCC is chaired by Dr. Yusheng Zhu will continue to develop these resources, and an additional 12 are in various stages of development.

The Academy is also collaborating with the SPCC on a newly formed AACC Task Force led by Dr. Victoria Zhang addressing FDA Emergency Use Approvals, performance, and standardization of COVID-19 serology tests.

As the AACC Annual Scientific Meeting has been postponed until December, we hope the Annual Academy Luncheon will also take place in Chicago, and we will have an opportunity to congratulate this year's Academy Award recipients in person. The winner of the 2020 AACC-AACC Academy Award for Outstanding Contributions to Clinical Chemistry in a Selected Area of Research is Ann Gronowski, PhD, FAACC, DABCC. The recipient of the Professor Alvin Dubin Award for Outstanding Contributions to the Profession and the Academy is Donald Wiebe, PhD, FAACC, DABCC, while the George Grannis Award for Excellence in Research and Scientific Publication goes to Xander van Wilk, PhD, DABCC. Heartfelt congratulations to the award recipients!

Finally, I wish to thank Dr. Roger Bertholf, for his outstanding leadership as President of the Academy in the past one and a half year. His leadership and vision provided us guidance and assured continuing productivity even during the challenging times of the pandemic. I also wish to thank to all departing and current members of the Academy Council for their passionate and productive work for the organization as members, authors, or reviewers, and for providing their insight in a wide-ranging issues of laboratory testing and health care. I also would like to thank Stefanie Kleinman, PMP, Manager of the AACC Academy for her hard work with managing the day-to-day affairs of the Academy and serving as our liaison to AACC. She can be reached at skleinman@aacc.org or academy@aacc.org with any questions or suggestions.

If you are interested in volunteering to help with any of the Academy initiatives or wish to serve on a committee, please fill out the volunteer today form.

I look forward to working with you and serving the Academy, the laboratory medicine community, and ultimately our patients.



Gyorgy Abel, MD, PhD, FAACC, DABCC
AACC Academy President