



DEIA Statement on AABB's 2023 Annual Meeting in Nashville

Updated: August 23, 2023

AABB is proud to welcome our members and community to the [2023 AABB Annual Meeting](#) in Nashville – our first in-person Annual Meeting since 2019.

Our diversity of backgrounds, knowledge and life experiences is critical to our success as an Association. That is why we are deeply committed to our [Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Access \(DEIA\) Action Plan](#), which is informed by member feedback via our DEIA Task Force and puts these principles into action across all facets of our Association.

Some members of our community have expressed concerns that this year's AABB Annual Meeting is being held in Tennessee in light of recent state action. We appreciate those who brought their concerns forward. We want to explain why we are committed to hosting the Annual Meeting in Nashville in 2023 and how we will use our presence there to make a positive impact.

For the transfusion medicine and biotherapies community, DEIA principles are a core foundation of patient health and safety; this includes everything from a diverse donor pool being critical to patient care and maintaining an adequate blood supply to scientists from different backgrounds and experiences having access to funding to support their research. AABB members throughout the world – and throughout Tennessee – work to uphold these values every day. You have our deep admiration and respect.

Local groups, such as the Tennessee Pride Chamber, are dedicated to helping organizations like AABB make a positive impact in Tennessee. In AABB's recent communications with the Tennessee Pride Chamber, officials reiterated that continuing with our plans for the 2023 AABB Annual Meeting in Nashville provides an opportunity to support local causes that align with AABB's values and that backing out of Nashville could invertedly hurt the very groups AABB wants to support:

“Travel bans and canceling events hurt the LGBTQ+ communities in Tennessee more than people realize... Tourism, which contributes significantly to our state's growth and well-being, disproportionately benefits members of our community who work in Tennessee's restaurants, arts and hospitality industries. Boycotts and canceling events disproportionately negatively impact LGBTQ+ communities and their allies. As the Tennessee Pride Chamber, we represent hundreds of corporations, small businesses, and individual LGBTQ+ professionals throughout Tennessee. We work to protect the more than 133,000 LGBTQ+ workers in Tennessee, making up 4% of the state's work force. We also advocate for our allies, who understand that an open and welcoming business climate is a successful business climate. Our members include some of the largest



corporations operating in Tennessee, including Tractor Supply, Nissan, Cracker Barrel, Tennessee Titans, Nashville Predators, AllianceBernstein, Vanderbilt University, HCA Healthcare | TriStar Health, Vanderbilt Health, Comcast, Genesco, Dell Technologies, Warner Music, Curb Records, Amazon, Mars Petcare and many more.”

-Brian Rosman, President of the Tennessee Pride Chamber

AABB understands that recent laws and activities in Tennessee create concerns for some in our community about traveling to, and staying in, Nashville. The actions that AABB is taking to ensure that everyone feels welcome, supported and safe at this year’s Annual Meeting include:

- All official 2023 AABB Annual Meeting educational events will take place within the walls of the Nashville Music City Convention Center or private meeting spaces.
- Dedicated safe spaces, including the DEIA Community Lounge, will be available for attendees to seek support, request assistance, engage in open discussions, and provide feedback to AABB staff. All attendees have access to these spaces at any point during the Annual Meeting.
- The Meeting agenda will include several sessions related to advancing DEIA efforts in blood and biotherapies. The DEIA committee is working on recommendations for further discussions. This will be shared with the community in forthcoming communication.
- AABB is working with socialoffset.org to offer interested Annual Meeting participants the opportunity to contribute to vetted, local charitable organizations, including those that support the LGBTQ+ community in Tennessee. The Nashville Music City Convention and Visitors Bureau is a founding partner of this program and is dedicated to supporting its local hospitality workforce, which comprises predominantly underrepresented groups, including women of color. AABB looks forward to sharing more information on this effort in the coming weeks.
- This year, we are adding a variety of new ribbons that Annual Meeting attendees can attach to their name badge to show their support to equity-deserving groups.

AABB understands that despite these and other safety and engagement measures, some may not feel comfortable or safe traveling to Nashville. To support inclusive access to our education, AABB will continue to offer on-demand sessions available shortly after the Annual Meeting. While we recognize there is no replacement for the full experience that the in-person Meeting offers, AABB is dedicated to ensuring our education is accessible and available to our entire community.

Finally, it is important for members to know more about AABB’s Annual Meeting host city selection process. For large conferences such as the AABB Annual Meeting, host city selections must be made up to 10 years in advance to secure the necessary space; for example, contracts were signed with Nashville in 2014. As a result, AABB Annual Meeting locations are booked through 2027; all but one of these locations were secured prior to 2017. These locations are Nashville, Houston, San Diego, Atlanta and Anaheim (rescheduled from 2021 due to the



COVID-19 pandemic). We understand that some of these locations present similar concerns that some members have raised about Nashville. While we cannot change locations that have been booked years in advance due to extreme financial implications, we can and do commit to using our presence in these places to reaffirm and share our values. In addition, AABB's Board of Directors has committed to reviewing our criteria for selecting future Annual Meeting locations, and we welcome our members' input on that process.

Again, we appreciate our members for sharing their perspectives, and we look forward to welcoming the blood and biotherapies community to Nashville in October.

AABB welcomes additional feedback from the community. Please visit AABB's DEIA website www.aabb.org/DEIA to explore our current work and access our feedback form. Your feedback will be reviewed by members of the AABB staff team and leaders of the DEIA Committee.