AABB is now the Association for the Advancement of Blood & Biotherapies
Time is one of the few things you can’t buy in life. For your temperature sensitive biologics, there is an exception. The B Medical Systems robust line of medical-grade refrigeration and cold chain transport devices can essentially slow the effects of time by extending the useful life of your valuable products for cell and gene therapy and blood product applications.

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Learn more about AABB’s new name, logo and brand.

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The AABB annual meeting is renowned for the quality of its research, and the 2021 Annual Meeting was no exception.
Greetings to my fellow AABB members. It is certainly an exciting time for our community; I am thrilled to be serving as the new president of our Association under its new name: Association for the Advancement of Blood and Biotherapies.

This is truly the beginning of a new era for our Association. In addition to our new name, we have a new logo and will be rolling out a broad, Association-wide rebranding initiative throughout 2022. There are many more exciting and new initiatives on the way, so stay tuned throughout the next year. This new phase will be so much more than a new name and logo; its intention is to expand the strength and value of AABB for you — the members of our community.

I know many of us have been looking forward to this new name and new era for our Association for several years. In fact, the renaming and rebranding of our Association is the culmination of the “Reimagining AABB” campaign that began in 2018. As part of that campaign, countless members of our community provided insight and feedback about the needs of the field and about how to expand the value of AABB. This new phase for AABB is a response to the insights gained during that campaign.

I know many of us agree: the name, logo and branding represent an important step forward for our Association. They more accurately reflect the work done by AABB and our members throughout the world. In addition, the new name and branding will help to amplify our Association in its mission and will welcome more professionals into our community. I look forward to the continued rollout of the rebranding and our other new initiatives in 2022.

Addressing Challenges

Amidst this important time for our Association, we know the fields of blood and biotherapies continue to face challenges. The ongoing COVID-19 pandemic has impacted our field in myriad ways. Our community works tirelessly to secure and maintain a stable and adequate blood supply, but unprecedented fluctuations in the supply and need for blood have strained our system throughout the pandemic. In addition, we continue to address challenges ensuring a sufficient and well-trained workforce, while we work to advance research in the field and expand the donor pool.

AABB is developing new and expanded initiatives to focus on many of these issues. We continue to advocate on behalf of the community with government and public health officials to implement policies that better address concerns with the supply. We are expanding our education efforts, offering new courses and resources for younger professionals in the field, and offering more free education and professional development programs for our members. We are also in the midst of restructuring our Association’s governance to ensure our committees reflect our membership and provide opportunities for people to get involved in shaping the Association.

Promoting Research and Expanding our Community

The challenges our field faces may be somewhat daunting, but solutions await us. Throughout the entire history of our field, research has been essential in developing solutions to solve challenges. Once again, research is needed to advance the field. It is only through research that we can advance science, develop solutions, and expand donor and patient care and safety. That’s why throughout my presidency, I intend to support and promote research in the field.

AABB is also expanding our efforts...
NEW! UltraCW II Automatic Cell Washer

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international, since ours is truly a global community with a mission that does not stop at national borders. As a proud Canadian AABB member, this is particularly important to me. You’ll notice AABB is significantly expanding its resources for our Spanish-speaking colleagues. All sessions at the recent 2021 AABB Annual Meeting were translated into Spanish. In addition, we are promoting the Quality Certificate Program as a way for facilities outside of the United States to advance their safety and quality, and we are exploring partnerships with international organizations — all in an effort to expand the safety and quality of blood and biotherapies throughout the world.

Thank You
I am thrilled and honored to serve as your Association president, and I thank my fellow AABB members for their support and encouragement. I also thank my predecessor, David Green, for his leadership throughout the past year. Dave has served during a difficult and busy time, but willingly met and courageously addressed our Association’s challenges at every turn.

Thanks also to the other members of the AABB Board of Directors and those that serve on our many Committees. It is your work that fuels the Association, and I am proud to work alongside you.

Throughout my presidency, I will welcome feedback and insight from all of you. Please feel free to contact me; I’ll be happy to discuss AABB and the field with you and I value your insight. I look forward to serving as your leader for the next year and continuing to work with all of you as we advance our Association’s critical mission: to make transfusion medicine and biotherapies safe, available, and effective worldwide.

Dana Devine MSA
AABB President

President’s Message

2021-22 AABB Board of Directors

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AABB’s National Blood Foundation (NBF) hosted a number of activities at the recent 2021 Annual Meeting. From the Virtual Run for Research to the R&D Summit, there were myriad ways for attendees to participate, learn and support the field.

Research and Development Summit
The R&D Summit took place over the course of 3 days and included 12 speakers, who each gave a presentation then answered questions in a Q&A format. The presentations comprised cutting-edge research in a variety of areas.

There were four speakers on the first day of the Summit, which had the theme “Innovate — The Current State.” The first presentation, given by Stephen Henry, PhD, founder and CEO of Kode Biotech, discussed Kode technology. Described as “multi-functional bio-paint,” this new type of technology has a number of practical applications, including screening for the SARS-CoV-19 antibody. Thierry Burnouf, PhD, the second presenter at the Summit, discussed virally inactivated human platelet lysates from outdated platelet concentrates for cellular therapy and regenerative medicine. The next two speakers gave a snapshot of the current research in two innovation and research network hubs. Dana Devine, PhD, AABB’s new president and chief scientist at Canadian Blood Services, spoke about how the Canadian Blood Services Centre for Innovation is moving research and innovation into the real world of a blood center. Following Devine, Susanne Marschner, PhD, gave an overview of the goals for the Vitalant Innovation Center which will focus on translational development from conceptual research to practical manufacturing.

The theme of the second day of the Summit was “An Exploration of Next Generation Blood Products and Innovations.” Both presentations discussed research that can impact the field 5-to-10 years from now. The first speaker was Commander Jean-Paul Chretien, who gave an introduction to the DARPA Biological Technologies Office and the Fieldable Solutions for Hemorrhage with bio-Artificial Resuscitation Products, or the FSHARP Project. The Department of Defense faces challenges in replacing lost blood in forward settings, which can become more significant in prolonged field care and mass casualty scenarios. The FSHARP project aims to develop a field-deployable, shelf-stable whole blood substitute as a hemorrhage countermeasure to sustain warfighters and civilian casualties in austere, pre-hospital settings (22.75 hours of ground travel and 20 hours of air travel). The second speaker was Thomas Boothby, PhD, who discussed his project, Biostasis. Boothby’s team is studying organisms to learn their tips and tricks to surviving millions of years and applying those characteristics to stabilize whole blood and its dependence on the cold chain.

The third program of the series discussed “What is the Greatest Challenge Facing the Blood and Biotherapies Field?” On this day, six scientific investigators gave 5-minute presentations, followed by a panel discussion. The topics included optimal collection of blood and cell therapy products, quality and safety and the workforce. The presenters were as follows:

- Scott R. Burger, MD
- Stella T. Chou, MD
- Brian Custer, PhD, MPH
- Neil Blumberg, MD
- Donald L. Siegel, PhD, MD
- Steven L. Spitalnik, MD

The robust discussion proposed some solutions to the challenges that were presented:

- Develop a large-scale network of apheresis collection centers to support commercial scale manufacturing of cell therapy products.
- Innovation and new tool development to support RH genotyped donor red cells to improve red cell matching.
- Implement systems to support future patient matching with an IT infrastructure for blood
centers to routinely manage.
• Design and implementation of a non-faculty cellular therapy staffing structure that supports career progression by placing ownership in the hands of individuals, provides more competitive wages and implements merit-based incentives.
• Enhanced communication strategies that educate the public and patients to improve blood availability to all populations.

**NBF Research Symposium**

The NBF also hosted a research symposium in which NBF Scholars — those who have completed their NBF early-career Scientific Grant Award-funded projects — plus new inductees to the NBF Hall of Fame and the NBF Award for Innovative Research recipient, gave brief presentations on their current research projects.

Presentations included:

**Vinca Alkaloids Promote Megakaryocyte Maturation and Platelet Biogenesis**
Arunoday Bhan, PhD  
Research Fellow in Pediatrics  
Boston Children’s Hospital

**Bone Marrow Microenvironment in Sickle Cell Disease**
Avital Mendelson, PhD  
Head, Laboratory of Stem Cell Biology & Engineering Research  
Assistant Member, Lindsley F. Kimball Research Institute  
New York Blood Center

**Erythroid TFR2: an Intriguing Therapeutic Target for Malaria Anemia**
Antonella Nai, PhD  
Group Leader  
Regulation of Iron Metabolism Unit  
Division of Genetics and Cell Biology  
San Raffaele Scientific Institute

**Induction of Hematopoietic Stem Cell Proliferation and Mobilization by Estrogen Receptor Signaling**
Hideyuki Oguro, PhD, MSc, BSc  
Assistant Professor, Department of Cell Biology  
University of Connecticut Health Center  
Adjunct Faculty, The Jackson Laboratory

**A Quarter Century of Improved Diagnostic Testing for Immune Platelet Disorders**
Brian Curtis, PhD, D(ABMLI), MT(ASCP) SBB  
Senior Director, Diagnostic Hematology  
Senior Investigator, Blood Research Institute  
Director, Platelet & Neutrophil Immunology Lab  
Versiti Blood Center of Wisconsin  
Adjunct Faculty, Clinical and Translational Science Institute, Medical College of Wisconsin

**Babesia and it’s Interaction with the Red Blood Cell**
Cheryl Lobo, PhD  
Head, Laboratory of Blood-Borne Parasites  
Member, Lindsley F. Kimball Research Institute  
New York Blood Center

**Anti-Viral Interferons Promote RBC Alloimmunization**
David R. Gibb, MD, PhD  
Assistant Professor, Division of Transfusion Medicine  
Department of Pathology and Laboratory Medicine  
Cedars-Sinai Medical Center

**NBF Virtual 5K Run for Research**

The AABB Annual Meeting just would not be the same without the annual NBF Run for Research. The 5K run/1-mile walk gives meeting participants and AABB staff a fun way to get some exercise outdoors while generating funds to support early-career researchers in the field of blood and related biotherapies. This year, the Run brought in $8,000 in support of innovative research. While the COVID-19 pandemic required that the AABB Annual Meeting — and Run — be held virtually, that did not stop participants from having fun and posting photos online.

The first place finishers were Andrew Fesnak, who ran the distance in 19:58, and Gay Wehrli, who clocked in at 24:56. There were winners and runners-up in all the different age groups, including the youngest runner, 5-year-old Alexander Miller, son of Amy Quiggins, the race organizer.

In addition to completing the Run individually, some of the participants ran in teams. A team that deserves special recognition is the On Point Medicals! On Point, which was founded in 2009 in Klagenfurt, Austria, supplies medical products to blood banks and transfusion services. On Point also manufactures worldwide leading indicator technology.

Run for Research registrants participated from eight countries around the world: Austria, Canada, France, Japan, Mexico, Saudi Arabia, Sweden and the United States. What a way to make a difference from a distance!