

JANUARY 2022
Vol. 24 No.1

AABB News

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**It's a
Celebration!**





This National Blood Donor Month,

AABB celebrates all you do to support donors and patients across the country. Thanks to you, patient lives are saved every day.

From all of us at AABB, Thank you!

[#NBDM](#) [#NationalBloodDonorMonth](#)

NATIONAL
BLOOD
DONOR
MONTH





6 Texas City Disaster Demonstrated Need for National Coordination in Blood Banking and Transfusion Medicine

When the French freighter SS Grandchamp exploded in April, 1947, the resulting injuries illuminated why an association of blood bankers was essential.



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A 2021 Annual Meeting session started a powerful dialog about white privilege, power-sharing dynamics and inequitable access to medical education.

Happy 75th Anniversary, AABB!

2022 marks an important milestone in the history of our Association: AABB was founded in 1947 – 75 years ago!

This landmark anniversary is something in which all members of our community can feel pride. For 75 years, the members of this Association have been at the forefront of advancing safety and quality – first in transfusion medicine and, later, in biotherapies and relationship testing as well.

Many of you know that our Association was originally founded as the American Association of Blood Banks to help ensure quality, safety and consistency across various blood collection and transfusion medicine facilities – a most noble goal that would ultimately help to improve patient outcomes.

Throughout the years, our Association expanded as our community continued to drive advancements in the field. AABB developed standards for the field, designed to ensure facilities maintained the highest levels of quality, and began using these standards as a basis for its Accreditation program. AABB also expanded its education offerings, allowing professionals in the field to share knowledge and best practices with others.

Today, our Association has expanded much further – and continues to do so. Our community comprises members far beyond the United States and we have expanded our work and mission. This, of course, is one of the key reasons that AABB rebranded as the Association for the Advancement of Blood & Biotherapies last year.

However, what has not changed is our Association's unwavering commitment to quality, advancing the field and ensuring optimal safety for patients, donors and staff.



Dana Devine, MSA

A Celebration

AABB will be celebrating our milestone anniversary throughout the year. In each issue of AABB News this year, we'll take a look at key moments in our Association's history. In this issue, beginning on page 6, we include a feature article about the 1947 explosion of a freighter docked in Texas City, Tex. – an event that led to the founding of AABB.

Throughout 2022, we'll celebrate our history in these pages and on AABB's social media channels. We'll include more articles, photos highlighting events and leaders of the past, and trivia about our impressive history. We'll also soon be launching a "75th Anniversary" web page on AABB's website.

I also encourage you to take a close look at *Transfusion*, AABB's peer-reviewed journal, every month. Throughout the year, the journal will highlight some monumental research that was previously published in its pages – research that represents important advancements in the field that we still appreciate today.

Finally, the celebration will culminate at the 2022 AABB Annual Meeting – to be held Oct. 1-4 in Orlando, Fla. – where the community will gather to honor our past, present and future.

Dana Devine MSA
AABB President

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Advancing Transfusion and
Cellular Therapies Worldwide

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INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY in Blood Banking & Transfusion Services CERTIFICATE PROGRAM

The AABB Information Technology in Blood Banking & Transfusion Services Certificate Program is a new resource for Information Technology (IT) professionals working in the field of blood banks and transfusion services. This program will provide your IT department with a solid foundation to understanding the blood banking and transfusion services field from the unique perspective of an IT professional. Ensure that patient safety and privacy remain a top priority by supporting your IT department's needs to stay current with regulatory requirements.

CONTENT OVERVIEW:

- Module 1: Overview of Blood Collection, Manufacturing, and Transfusion
- Module 2: Blood Establishment Computer Software (BECS)
- Module 3: Regulating and Accrediting Authorities in Blood Banking
- AABB Blood Banking & Transfusion Medicine 101 eCast series: Selected Sessions

INDIVIDUAL REGISTRATION PRICING:

- **AABB Individual Member: \$479** (Introductory Price: \$379)
- **Individual Nonmember: \$579** (Introductory Price: \$479)

Special Introductory Pricing: A \$100 discount is provided for learners who register for the program prior to January 31, 2022.

Additional discounts provided for 2 or more individuals from the same facility.

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The NBF Has Spent Nearly 40 Years and More Than \$11 Million Supporting AABB's Mission

The National Blood Foundation (NBF) supports AABB's mission to advance the field of transfusion medicine and biotherapies. It does so through grant making, educational offerings and industry leadership engagement and recognition. The NBF's Scientific Research Grants program encourages innovation by providing grants to early-career researchers. So far, the program has funded more than 200 awardees by providing more than \$11 million in grants. Many grant recipients have gone on to become subject matter experts and leaders in the field.

The NBF was established in 1983 as the AABB Foundation. It was funded through an initial endowment of \$500,000 from the reserves of the National Clearinghouse (now the National Blood Exchange). Edward O. Carr, MT(ASCP)SBB, who was serving as AABB president at the time, proposed using the money to support research by funding projects consistent with AABB's mission, initiating a process that would result in the founding of the NBF. In 1985, the NBF awarded its first grants for scientific research in transfusion medicine, providing a combined total of \$29,000 to four grant recipients.

The Foundation Grows

In 1988, the AABB Foundation was organized and began operating separately from AABB as the National Blood Foundation. The newly renamed NBF awarded its first international grant, and grant awards increased to \$30,000 each. That same year, the NBF

Council on Research and Development (CORD) was established, doubling the Foundation's endowment to \$1.2 million. Of those founding CORD members, Abbott Laboratories has invested in the Foundation's mission from the start.

The NBF separated from AABB in 1990, becoming an independent 501(c)

(3) charitable trust, but rejoined AABB as an AABB program in 1992.

In 1994, the National Blood Foundation Research & Education Trust (NBFRET) was established as a 509(a)(3) organization. The following year, the NBF introduced the NBF Scholar Program to recognize grant recipients upon completion of the final reports summarizing their NBF grant-funded research.

The NBF hosted its first Annual Golf Tournament and Challenge Cup in 1997 to raise money for its early-career Scientific Research Grants program. In 1999, the NBF introduced the first annual Run for Research to raise additional funds for the Scientific Research Grants program.

The first annual NBF Leadership Forum took place in 2003, uniting leaders in transfusion medicine and cellular therapies to discuss and plan for industry challenges. The NBF Partners Program was also established that year, offering another opportunity for blood centers and corporations to support the Foundation and engage in its work.

During this time, previous recipients of NBF grants continued to expand their careers; many became involved in some of the field's most high-profile endeavors. For example, Edward Snyder, MD, became the first prior NBF grant recipient to serve as president of AABB in 1998. Also in 1998, another previous grant recipient — Christopher Colton Silliman, MD, PhD — was appointed as associate medical director at Bonfils Blood Center in Denver, Col.

In 2002, another prior NBF Scientific Research Grant recipient, Walter "Sunny" Dzik, began leading a large, international, multicenter Biomedical Excellence for Safer Transfusion (BEST) study. This study focused on blood grouping errors resulting from miscollected blood samples. In addition, NBF CORD members together with the AABB Board of Directors agreed to approve the increase of the annual CORD contribution to \$75,000 by 2004.

Expanding to Cellular Therapies

The NBF introduced cellular therapies (CT) as a



separate research content area within the Scientific Research Grants program in 2005, and another NBF prior grant recipient, Paul Mintz, MD, began his term as AABB President. The following year, NBF grant awards increase to \$65,000 and Christopher Hillyer, MD, another NBF past grant recipient, became AABB president. In addition, Marion Elizabeth Reid, PhD, GIBMS, also a prior NBF grant recipient, received the International Women in Transfusion Award, which honors women for lifetime achievement in transfusion medicine and science.

In the year after that, 2007, the NBF Hall of Fame was established to showcase researchers who had used their NBF grant to leverage a successful career and leadership positions within transfusion medicine and cellular therapies.

In 2009, NBF grant awards increase to \$75,000 each. The following year, Connie M. Westhoff, SBB, PhD, a prior NBF grant recipient, became the director of Immunohematology and Genomics at the New York Blood Center. In 2011, yet another prior NBF grant recipient, James P. AuBuchon, MD, FCAP, FRCP(Edin), became AABB's next president.

In 2012, Michael P. Busch, another prior NBF grant recipient, co-authored a publication in *Transfusion* titled "Human immunodeficiency virus prevalence, incidence, and residual risk of transmission by transfusions at Retrovirus Epidemiology Donor Study-II [REDS-II] blood centers in Brazil."

30th Anniversary and Beyond

In 2013, the NBF celebrated its 30th anniversary, and a study funded in part by the NBF resulted in a method to address the shortage of blood lacking the Vel blood group antigens. Jill Storry, PhD, a previous NBF grant recipient, and her colleagues discovered that the presence of the Vel antigen on red blood cells is controlled by a previously unknown protein called SMIM1. Also that year, the NBF introduced patient blood management (PBM) as a research content area within the Scientific Research Grants program. Since its inception, the NBF had awarded close to \$8 million in grant funding to more than 180 national and international early-career researchers in transfusion medicine and cellular therapies.

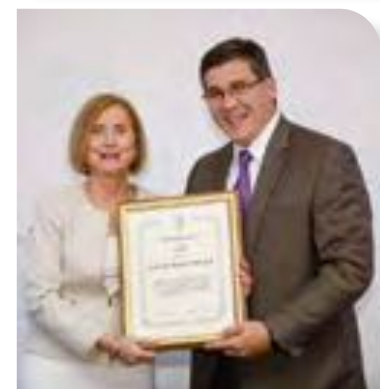
The NBF reinstated the Hall of Fame in 2015 to annually recognize a prestigious group of scientists who had begun their career with NBF grant funding. The following year, the NBF's mission was revised to "Fueling Innovation in Transfusion Medicine and Cellular Therapies for the Benefit of Patients and Donors."

NBF alumni Karina Yazdanbakhsh, PhD; Cheryl Ann Lobo, PhD; Francesca Vinchi, PhD; and Avital Mendelson, PhD received a \$15.6 million grant to study transfusion research in 2020.

By the following year, 2021, the NBF had distributed \$11 million in early-stage grant funding. In addition, the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute awarded \$2.5 million that year to Larry L. Luchsinger, PhD, to complete a 5-year research project titled "Hormetic ER stress Regulation of Hematopoietic Stem Cell Function."

Very recently, the AABB Board approved the establishment of a new 509(a)(3) type 1 supporting organization that aligns the NBF's fundraising and the NBFRET's grantmaking activities in response to the NBFRET's mandatory dissolution in 2022. The NBF looks forward to its next phase and will continue to fund research and initiatives that help to advance the field.

NBF's long history and extraordinary impact on the field are due to the generosity of many individuals, blood centers, foundations and corporations that have donated funding and volunteered time and leadership to serve the Foundation's mission. ■



To learn more about how you and your organization can become involved, please contact the NBF today, nbf@aabb.org, www.aabb.org/nbf.