

MARCH 2025  
Vol. 27 No. 3

# AABB News

- 8 A Look at Maternal Health in Resource-Limited Countries
- 13 The BLOODSAFE Program in Kenya Tackles Blood Shortage Risks
- 16 Filmmaker's Documentary Spotlights Nigeria's Maternal Mortality Crisis



## Addressing Blood Needs Around the World



 | **2025**  
**SAN DIEGO**  
**OCTOBER 25-28**

## Make an Impact With Your Research

The 2025 AABB Annual Meeting is an ideal opportunity to showcase your research! This year, the AABB Annual Meeting will provide many opportunities to shine and be recognized, including:

- Oral abstract presentations
- In-Person poster tours
- Spotlight sessions with top researchers in the field
- Top posters
- Abstract awards

Help advance the field by sharing your research with blood and biotherapies professionals from throughout the world, extending the impact well beyond the meeting.

**Abstract Submissions Due May 19.**  
**[aabb.org/annual-meeting](http://aabb.org/annual-meeting)**

# 8

## A Look at Maternal Health in Resource-Limited Settings

Expanding blood accessibility for pregnant women can reduce high maternal mortality rates due to postpartum hemorrhage, improving outcomes in low- and middle-income countries.

# 13

## The BLOODSAFE Kenya Project

Researchers discuss the continual blood shortage in Kenya and the implementation of community-facility transfusion committees to improve blood availability in Kenyan hospitals.



### COLUMNS & INTERVIEWS

President's Message

**2 Advancing Global Health**

AABB Foundation

**3 AABB Foundation President Discusses the Future of Medicine**

In Conversation

**16 Filmmaker's Documentary Spotlights Nigeria's Maternal Mortality Crisis**

Regional Roundup

**19 Around the World: Key Resources for Blood and Biotherapies Professionals**

Be Well

**20 10 Benefits of Strength Training for Physical Health**

White Coats

**22 Marie Paul Nisingizwe MSc, PhD: Leveraging Translational Research to Strengthen Health Systems Worldwide**

### DEPARTMENTS

**26 Membership Focus**

**27 Significant Findings**

**28 Of Note**

**29 Calendar**

## Advancing Global Health

Welcome to our first fully digital edition of *AABB News*! As an AABB member, you have complete access to the *AABB News* archives, which will be updated with a new issue every month. As always, *AABB News* is the best place for news about the blood and biotherapies field, comprising news, feature stories and exclusive content on critical issues affecting the field—all at your fingertips. In addition, we are excited about launching an online platform to expand our storytelling capabilities, engage our members and enhance our readers' experience. This new chapter for *AABB News* will contribute to environmental sustainability while improving accessibility and convenience for our members.

### Improving Care Worldwide

This issue of *AABB News* focuses on addressing blood needs around the world—a cause that is close to my heart. I became actively involved in global health outreach in the field more than 15 years ago. During my first visit to Africa as an MPH student, I was exposed to the multidimensional crises related to lack of blood; from maternal health crisis due to obstetrical hemorrhage, to children with severe anemia, patients with cancer and those with traumatic injuries. Since then, I've partnered with colleagues and blood experts in the field of transfusion medicine to develop sustainable blood transfusion systems and eliminate blood deserts in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs).

AABB is committed to improving lives by making transfusion medicine and biotherapies safe, available and effective worldwide. We appreciate the efforts of blood and biotherapies professionals to expand access to care and



Meghan Delaney,  
DO, MPH

ensure that more people can receive lifesaving transfusions.

The first feature in this issue addresses maternal mortality rates in LMICs and discusses viable solutions to expand access to blood transfusions for expectant mothers. The second feature highlights the BLOODSAFE program in Kenya and its efforts to evaluate the gaps in the availability of safe blood for patients with severe anemia and hemorrhagic conditions. In addition, this issue features a Q&A with filmmaker Jon Kasbe, where he discusses his documentary *Blood Rider* that describes blood delivery on motorcycles and the blood shortage crisis in Nigeria.

AABB's mission is to make transfusion medicine and biotherapies safe, available and effective worldwide. While we are focusing on advancing global health in this issue of *AABB News*, this is a priority for our association every day of the year. Expect to read more about AABB's global efforts and our worldwide community in the coming months. ■

Meghan Delaney, DO, MPH  
AABB President

#### President

Meghan Delaney, DO, MPH

#### Chief Executive Officer

Debra BenAvram, FASAE, CAE

#### Chief Communications and Engagement Officer

Julia Zimmerman

#### Director of Marketing and Communications

Jay Lewis, MPH

#### Managing Editor

Kendra Y. Applewhite, MFA

#### Senior Communications Manager

Drew Case

#### Design and Production

V Studio

#### Advertising

Contact Karl Franz

+1.603.416.0364

kfranz@wiley.com

#### Change of Address:

Make changes online at [www.aabb.org](http://www.aabb.org) > Membership > My Account

#### Notice to Copiers:

Reproduction in whole or part is strictly prohibited unless written permission has been granted by the publisher. AABB members need not obtain prior permission if proper credit is given.

#### Postmaster:

Send address changes to AABB News; c/o Member Services; 4550 Montgomery Avenue; Suite 700 North Tower; Bethesda, MD 20814.

#### AABB News

(ISSN 1523939X) is published monthly, except for the combined November/December issue for the members of AABB; 4550 Montgomery Avenue; Suite 700 North Tower; Bethesda, MD 20814.

AABB is an international, not-for-profit association representing individuals and institutions involved in transfusion medicine, cellular therapies and patient blood management. The association is committed to improving health by developing and delivering standards, accreditation and educational programs that focus on optimizing patient and donor care and safety.

+1.301.907.6977

Email: [news@aabb.org](mailto:news@aabb.org)

Website: [www.aabb.org](http://www.aabb.org)

Copyright 2025 by AABB.

Periodicals postage paid at Bethesda, MD, and at additional mailing offices.

Views and opinions expressed in *AABB News* are not necessarily endorsed by AABB unless expressly stated.

Publications Mail Agreement No. 41248513.

Return undeliverable Canadian addresses to PO Box 503; RPO West Beaver Creek; Richmond Hill, ON L4B 4R6.



Association for the Advancement  
of Blood & Biotherapies

## AABB eCasts

- Accommodates Your Schedule—Anytime and From Any Location
- Engage With Experts
- Latest Information About Research, Products and Services



# Invest in AABB eCasts

to elevate your professional skills and augment your organization's capacities. These acclaimed 60-90-minute interactive online programs explore crucial topics in the field, offering comprehensive insights. Each session includes a dedicated question-and-answer segment with renowned experts.

[aabb.org/ecasts](http://aabb.org/ecasts)

# AABB Foundation President Discusses the Future of Medicine

By Kendra Y. Applewhite, MFA  
Managing Editor



Richard Schäfer, MD, FRSB

**R**ichard Schäfer, MD, FRSB, is a professor and the medical director of transfusion medicine at the Institute for Transfusion Medicine and Gene Therapy of the Medical Center of the University of Freiburg. He was previously appointed as an assistant professor of transfusion medicine at Goethe University in Frankfurt am Main, Germany. He is also a member of the Center for Stem Cell Biology and Regenerative Medicine at the University of Maryland School of

Medicine in Baltimore, and he was elected as Fellow of the Royal Society of Biology.

Schäfer's research is driven by questions of basic and translational science. He has authored more than 100 peer-reviewed publications in the fields of stem cell biology, clinical cellular therapies and transfusion medicine. He is an associate editor of the *Journal of Translational Medicine*, and an editorial advisor for *BMC Medicine*. He also serves on the editorial boards of several other international peer-reviewed journals. In addition to his scientific work, he has a strong interest in teaching and in developing novel teaching formats.

Schäfer has been active in AABB for many years; he is currently serving as vice president of the AABB Board of Directors, as member of the Standards, Accreditation and Regulatory Council, and as AABB-ISCT Human Platelet Lysate Joint Working Group co-leader. He has also served as the secretary of AABB's Cellular Therapies Section Coordinating

Committee (CTSCC), the CTSCC liaison to the Annual Meeting Education Committee, and as co-leader of the Novel Therapies and Cellular Therapies Product Development Subsection.

He has been actively involved in planning for AABB's annual meetings, including pre-meeting workshops, sessions and committee meetings. He is also member of the International Society of Blood Transfusion, the International Society of Cellular Therapy, the German Society of Transfusion Medicine and Immunohematology, and the German Stem Cell Network.

Schäfer spoke with *AABB News* about his career path, the future of transfusion medicine and his dedication to supporting ongoing research and the AABB Foundation.

## **The Journey**

### ***What inspired you to pursue a career in transfusion medicine and biotherapies?***

I'm a trained internist, and during my clinical work, I encountered several interesting cases that intersected with transfusion medicine. This exposure helped me to see the clinical relevance of transfusion medicine, as well as the significant opportunities regarding research. This truly intrigued me, and after finishing my internal medicine training, I switched gears and pursued the field of transfusion medicine, which I have never regretted. This field offers a broad variability of topics, as well as the opportunity to conduct research. Transfusion medicine training can vary in different countries. In Germany, for example, we have a clinical specialization for transfusion medicine. What remains consistent is that transfusion medicine is a critical interface between multiple clinical disciplines. In modern medicine, it is rare for transfusion medicine not to be involved in patient care somehow.



# Expanding Blood Accessibility for Pregnant Women in Resource-Limited Countries

By Kendra Y. Applewhite, MFA  
Managing Editor

**C**aroline Wesonga Wangamati, MSc, MA, BCom, of Bungoma County, Kenya, first witnessed the devastating consequences of blood shortages during childbirth when she was visiting the referral hospital in Bungoma, a border town. That evening, a woman arrived in an ambulance. After the medical team rushed her to the operating room, Wangamati noticed the driver cleaning up a copious amount of blood pooled on the ambulance floor.

Moments later, the staff announced the patient had died. Wangamati heard the cry of a newborn, and everything clicked when she saw a member of the medical team cradling an infant in her arms.

“I didn’t know anything about the patient up until that point. But in that moment, I realized the patient

who died was the mother of the newborn child who would never know her mother. The referral had come too late,” she recalled. “That was the day I became aware of the severity of postpartum hemorrhage [PPH]. For a long time, I was blissfully unaware of the blood challenges.”

Although that tragic and preventable death occurred a decade ago, the same challenges of blood transfusions for PPH still plague Uganda, Kenya and many other countries today.

“The fact remains that PPH continues to be the leading cause of maternal mortality worldwide. Nearly 90% of these deaths occur in Southern Asia and Africa,” stated Wangamati. “My counterparts in Uganda face similar challenges regarding access