



NEWS & VIEWS

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PRESIDENT'S CORNER

As I reflect on my year as President of the NACB, the old adage “easy come, easy go” comes to mind. This may sound flippant but let me explain. It was easy for me to transition into the role thanks to the efforts of my predecessors and it's easy to hand the position over to others knowing who will be coming after me. During much of the history of the Academy, the office of President has been a two-year term. My year as President marks a change to a one-year term; therefore, Bob Dufour will become NACB's President on January 1, 2004. (I have been assured that there is nothing personal about this change.) The length of service for the President was changed to shorten the length of commitment as an officer from six years to three years (President-elect, President, and Past President) and to allow other qualified Fellows to serve as elected leaders of the Academy.

In my final editorial I wish to highlight some of the accomplishments for 2003. In many cases, these represent the harvest from seeds planted in prior years. In addition, many worked in the field, so many deserve credit for the success.

- Membership increased for the fifth consecutive year, ending 2003 with 536 members. Membership growth was possible because almost all Academy Fellows renewed.
- NACB award recipients were recognized at the AACC Annual Meeting during the Opening Session, on a display in the registration area, and at the exhibit booth.
- Fellows were identified at the AACC Annual Meeting with the NACB logo on their name badges.

- Past Presidents of the NACB were honored with new official Presidential medals.
- A process for identifying distinguished abstracts at the AACC Annual Meeting was evaluated.
- NACB was identified as a supporting organization for the highly successful website Lab Tests Online.
- Four LMPGs were posted on the website of the National Guidelines Clearinghouse, thereby increasing the impact of these Academy guidelines.
- Thyroid LMPG was published in *Thyroid*; Emergency Toxicology LMPG was published in *Clinical Chemistry*.
- NACB assumed responsibility for planning the 2004 Beckman Conference as a consensus conference for an LMPG on cardiac markers.
- Comments on “Statistical Guidance on Reporting Results from Studies Evaluating Diagnostic Tests” were sent to FDA.
- An annual review process for committee performance was inaugurated.
- Major progress was made in developing a Board of Directors Manual in order to organize and codify operating policies and procedures for future Boards.
- An annual planning cycle for strategic initiatives was established.

As I look over this list of a baker's dozen worth of accomplishments, I'm pleased with what has been done. It's been a great year and there are many to thank. I have had a tremendous Board of Directors to work with and I appreciate their support. The staff in the AACC office, particularly Penny Jones, has been incredible. Most of all I appreciate the efforts and participation of each Fellow. You make the NACB a very special Academy! Best wishes to Bob Dufour.

K. MICHAEL PARKER, PhD, FACB
President

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REPORT OF THE PRESIDENT-ELECT



As the new year approaches, I am looking forward to assuming the job of President of the Academy. I know it has been in good hands with Mike

Parker at the helm. I want to express my thanks to those who are finishing leadership roles with the Academy, particularly Charles Hawker, the Past-President, who has served on the Board continuously for the past nine years. We will miss Charlie's accumulated wisdom and institutional memory on the Board; he has agreed to remain active in a number of committees. David Koch finishes his term as Secretary, John Sherwin and Jim Nichols finish their terms as At-Large members of the Board, and Bill Winter finishes his term as Chair of the Education and Scientific Affairs Committee. Thanks to all of you for your hard work and dedication on behalf of the Academy.

I am lucky to be assuming the Presidency at a time of great success and prestige for the Academy. Our membership is at record high numbers, as more and more of the Board Certified Clinical Chemists have decided it is good to belong to NACB. This winter, we will once again invite those not currently members to join, and will be extending special invitations to those overseas who would likely be eligible for membership. Through the efforts of our LMPG programs and publications, including those available on the National Guideline Clearinghouse, NACB is increasingly recognized by clinical associations as an important partici-

pant in developing practice guidelines. We should all be proud to belong to this group that is taking the lead in practice guidelines involving laboratory testing.

Although it is tempting to look at our current status and say that the glass is 90% full, it is the job of the President to say “yes, but the glass is still 10% empty”, and see where the Academy has room to grow. I have presented a number of strategic initiatives for 2004 to the Board, and wanted to share these with you. First, I believe that it is time to review our Strategic Plan, and update it to guide our course over the next 5 years. To do this, I will need input from the Fellows of the Academy. We will be designing a survey to get your input on your evaluation of NACB products and services, and to determine your priorities for use of the Academy’s resources. We will be looking at the current committee structure, with an eye to possibly revising the by-laws to allow our organizational structure to best meet our needs. We will be looking at possible new venues for presenting our guidelines, including this year’s “experiment” with the Beckman conference. Finally, we will be trying to develop closer links with organizations of clinical physicians to identify new topics for guideline development in the future.

This year will be a time of transition for me in other ways as well, as I have announced my intention to retire from the VA at the end of 2004. I am excited by the opportunity to further advance the stature and services of NACB over the next few years, and hope that the year 2004 will be productive for the Academy. I look forward to working with all of you over the next year to “advance the science and practice of clinical laboratory medicine”.

D. ROBERT DUFOUR, M.D., FACB
President Elect

REMINDER NOMINATIONS FOR 2004

A request for nominations goes out in February. Dr. Larry Demers will be Nominating Committee Chair in 2004.

LAB TESTS ONLINE RECEIVES SUMMIT AWARD

Lab Tests Online has been selected by the American Society of Association Executives (ASAE) as one of six projects to be recognized with its 2003 Summit Award. The Award is ASAE’s highest honor for associations that implement innovative projects to enhance American society at the local, state, or national level.

Conceived and produced by the American Association for Clinical Chemistry (AACC), Lab Tests Online provides descriptions of laboratory tests in simple, easy-to-understand language. Each test page describes why a test is used, how and when it is used, and what the tests results might mean. Numerous links help users find additional related information on the site or elsewhere on the web.

Lab Tests Online currently averages more than 200,000 visits a month and its pages are regularly among the top-ranked pages on Internet searches for laboratory tests and related information. In addition, Lab Tests Online is cited multiple times in such important consumer reference works as California’s HMO Guide, NIH’s Medline Plus website, and the Food & Drug Administration website. Yahoo’s Directory listings under Consumer Medical Advice identify Lab Tests Online as the most popular site in the category.

While AACC has spearheaded the project since its inception, content development for the site is a collaborative effort that today involves 14 laboratory associations, including NACB. Members of the associations have also been instrumental in helping to promote the site. Lab Tests Online is supported through sponsorships from corporations in the diagnostics industry.

AACC received the award at a gala dinner sponsored by ASAE. A video showcasing Lab Tests Online and AACC’s acceptance of the award was pre-recorded for the dinner and is available for viewing online:

<http://labtestsonline.org/members/news/031016summit.html>

CARDIAC MARKERS: ESTABLISHING GUIDELINES AND IMPROVING RESULTS

(26th Arnold O. Beckman Conference)

May 21-22, 2004

Hyatt Regency Cambridge, Massachusetts, Sponsored by AACC and NACB

As noted in the last issue of *NACB News and Views*, the draft guidelines of the new cardiac marker LMPG will be presented at the AACC Arnold Beckman Conference scheduled for May 21-22, 2004. Dr. Rob Christenson, conference chair and chair of the ACS and heart failure LMPG, has invited cardiac experts from several different clinical and stakeholder groups to participate in this conference and to provide input into the guidelines. Conference attendees will also be given the opportunity to provide feedback on the guidelines, which will be published after the meeting.

Who Should Attend

This is a must-attend conference for clinicians, laboratorians, and other health care professionals involved in the diagnosis and treatment of acute coronary syndromes and heart failure who want to hear a comprehensive review of the most recent guidelines and who have an interest in providing input on the new NACB guidelines for biochemical markers.

Learning Outcomes:

As a result of attending this conference, participants will have achieved the following learning objectives in regards to the assessment and care of patients with acute coronary syndromes and heart failure:

- Know the most up-to-date guidelines for diagnosis, risk stratification, and treatment.
- Understand the evidence-based background for the guidelines.
- Understand how the biochemical marker guidelines, when systematically applied, result in improved patient care and outcomes.
- Be prepared to integrate the guidelines for biochemical markers with other decision-making tools in diagnosing and treating acute coronary syndromes and heart failure.

For conference details and to register, go to: www.aacc.org/meetings/beckman/.

