NEW NAME! Same great news.
Vol. 19, No. 1, January 2013
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EDUCATION

• Attention All Molecular Genetics Program Directors: Are you interested in how to best train our fellows in genomics, determining the minimum requirements for genomics training in individual programs, establishing an ideal fellowship curriculum, and deciding if there would be a role for a separate fellowship (maybe in genomic bioinformatics) to complement the MSP fellowship? The MGP Fellow Training in Genomics Task Force is currently drafting a manuscript and can use your input. MGP Program Directors interested in serving on the Task Force can contact Anna Berry (anna.berry@ucsf.edu) for more information.

• What board certifications are currently available to individuals seeking certification in molecular diagnostics? Access the free report "Certification in Molecular Pathology in the United States: An Update from the Association for Molecular Pathology Training and Education Committee," [http://www.journals.elsevierhealth.com/periodicals/jmdi/article/S1525-1578(12)00180-9].

• What LDTs are currently being offered to patients? The FDA "framework" on oversight of LDTs released in 2013; the Agency must notify Congress at least 60-days before issuing the document. The PRC is preparing to engage the Agency and will keep AMP members informed.

• The PRC continues to monitor and engage Congress and federal agencies on efforts to restrict federal employee’s educational travel.

• Scheduled automatic budget reductions known “sequestration” were postponed until March 1 as part of the “fiscal cliff” negotiations. Congress and the President will be negotiating over these reductions and raising the government’s borrowing limit “debt ceiling” over the next several weeks.

• AMP continues its outreach to other organizations to partner in mutually beneficial educational opportunities. Martin Fleisher was also selected to present at the SLAS 2013 2nd Annual Conference, in addition to William Wachsmann and Eric Duncavage. For details about the conference, visit http://www.slas2013.org/index.cfm.

AMP AT WORK FOR YOU

• The Nominating Committee is hard at work on the 2013 AMP election ballot and seeking individuals who are willing to serve in a variety of important roles, in the subcommittees and organizational leadership. Self nominations are encouraged.

Open positions include:
• President-Elect
• Secretary-Treasurer
• Program Committee Chair-Elect
• Training & Education Committee Chair
• Membership Affairs Committee Chair
• Technical Topics Representative to the Program Committee
CONTACT: Iris Schrijver (ischrijver@stanfordmed.org) or James R. Cook (cookj2@ccf.org)

Genetica Subdivision
• Clinical Practice Committee Representative
• Nominating Committee Representative
• Program Committee Representative
• Training & Education Committee Representative
CONTACT: Sam Caughron (scaughron@mawdpathology.com) or Ramakrishnan Sasi (ramakrishnan.sasi@mghs.org)

Hematopathology Subdivision
• Chair
• Clinical Practice Committee Representative
• Nominating Committee Representative
• Program Committee Representative
• Training & Education Committee Representative
CONTACT: Daniel Arber (darber@stanford.edu) or James R. Cook (cookj2@ccf.org)

Infectious Diseases Subdivision
• Clinical Practice Committee Representative
• Nominating Committee Representative

AMP ADVOCACY

• The AMP Board of Directors appointed Aaron Bossler and Jan Nowak as co-Chairs of the Economic Affairs Committee (EAC). Estee Stein was appointed as a regular member and Dana Almanger as a junior member.

• The new molecular pathology CPT procedure codes went into effect on January 1, 2013. The AMP Economic Affairs Committee (EAC) will present a webinar on Tuesday, February 26, 1:00-2:00pm EST "Ins & Outs of Coding with the New Molecular Pathology CPT Procedure Codes." Registration is now open: https://www2.gotomeeting.com/register/536507538.

• AMP provided preliminary comments to CMS on the 2013 PFS Final Rule which expressed disappointment with the placement of all of the molecular pathology procedures on the CLFS and noted concerns regarding 1) creation of a single HCPCS G-code, 04542, to recognize physician work related to a large number of procedures with varying Relative Values recommended by the AMA and 2) the notion that some of the molecular pathology procedures are "automated" and produce obvious results, precluding the need for professional work. The EAC is composing detailed comments for CMS about each of these topics and will continue to collaborate with fellow professional associations. View AMP’s comments at: http://bit.ly/2WEC9C.

• The EAC framework proposal for CPT coding for multi-gene sequencing assays will be submitted soon to the AMA CPT Editorial Panel. Stakeholders will have the opportunity to engage during the development process.

• Aaron Bossler has been appointed to the AMA Molecular Pathology Advisory Group. The members of this group provide expertise to the CPT Editorial Panel and the Pathology Coding Caucus (PCC). Jan Nowak will replace Dr. Bossler on the PCC, with Jill Hagenkord and Sam Caughron serving as alternates.

• The LTD Working Group of the Professional Relations Committee (PRC) continues its work drafting a white paper to address the complexities involved with oversight of LTDs.

• PRC has been actively engaged in efforts to obtain NYSDOH recognition of Molecular Genetic Pathology certification by the Clinical Laboratory Evaluation Program.

• Roger Klein represented AMP at the second USPTO roundtable to discuss the impact of gene patents on the ability of patients to access confirmatory (2nd opinion) testing. This is a part of a Congressional mandated study.

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• AMP is in the process of implementing the online media PopVox.com to aid our legislative efforts and gain awareness of our positions.

• AMP has started an Industry Member Task Force, and is looking forward to receiving input on issues of concern to members working in industry.

• The PRC continues to interact with, and when appropriate, coordinate with other organizations such as CAP, ASCP, ACLA, and the Personalized Medicine Coalition.

• The placement of the molecular pathology CPT codes on the CLFS removed the principle need (in the eyes of Congress) to introduce legislation to designate non-physician doctoral scientists with appropriate training and experience as Qualified Health Care Practitioners, permitted to bill Medicare directly from the Physician Fee Schedule for interpretive services for tests in the Molecular Pathology section of the CPT codebook. AMP is discussing with the seven-member coalition ways to continue the discussion regarding the essential role of professional work in molecular pathology testing.

• When the last Congressional Session closed, any legislation introduced, but not passed, would have to be re-introduced in order for it to continue on a pathway to becoming law. AMP representatives will visit white paper to address the complexities involved with oversight of LDTs.

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Congressional offices once the new Session opens to introduce itself to new members, to offer AMP member expertise, and to monitor activity. AMP is well-received on Capitol Hill and we look forward to continue offering positive interactions and influence.

• The U.S. Supreme Court has agreed to hear the gene patent case. Oral arguments are expected to be scheduled for mid-April, with a decision in late June.

INNOVATION & IMPROVED PATIENT CARE

• Congratulations to Paul Rothberg for being appointed as the CPC’s liaison to the Molecular Oncology Committee of the College of American Pathologists! AMP gratefully acknowledges Linda Sabatini who served in that role over the last six years.


• The AMP Variant Nomenclature Database is now available to AMP members to facilitate standardizing the nomenclature used in clinical reports. This resource will continue to grow with your help! We invite you to submit the gene variants you work on in your lab. The submissions will reviewed by a subcommittee prior to being included in the database. If you missed the specialty lunch at the annual meeting on using and contributing to the database, you can view Linda Jeng’s presentation, the database files, and the procedure for contributing to the AMP Variant Nomenclature Database in the CHAMP 2.0 “Open Forum” under the “Library” tab in the “AMP Variant Nomenclature Database” folder at [http://bit.ly/13Icm0G] (CHAMP 2.0 login is required).

• AMP was represented by Loren Joseph, CPC Chair and Roger Klein, PRC Chair, at a recent NCI Workshop, “Evidence Needed to Support the Clinical Utility of Molecular Diagnostics” in Bethesda, MD. The workshop presentations will be posted at [http://cancerdiagnosis.nci.nih.gov].