

# Penn Medicine Pathology & Laboratory Medicine REPORT

*A staff newsletter  
published by the Penn Medicine  
Department of Pathology  
and Laboratory Medicine*

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## Chair's Corner

**David B. Roth, MD, PhD**

*Simon Flexner Professor and Chair of Pathology and Laboratory Medicine  
Director, Penn Center for Precision Medicine*

When I was in college, I thought I would become either a professional musician or a veterinarian. A different path led me to medical school, where I encountered my first patients with advanced cancer. At the time, there was nothing much we could do. Even when we tried new therapeutic approaches for this difficult and pernicious disease, the results were often so dismal, devastating, and humbling that I vowed to focus my attention on researching and understanding the basic biology driving cancers. You could say I became like a detective trying to investigate the clues to the causes of this disease.

For this reason, I'm especially pleased with this year's theme for Medical Laboratory Professionals Week, "Diagnosis Detectives." I find the idea that we are all detectives in the quest for knowledge a very apt metaphor here because the right treatment begins with the right diagnosis. Every day, our laboratory staff and pathologists work in various teams with clinical colleagues to help diagnose and manage treatments of our patients. Your work in the labs provides the answers that, in turn, become the cornerstone of patient care.

In my area of specialty, we at Penn Medicine now have some of the world's most advanced research and life-saving clinical trials that are bringing the cure for cancer within reach and our Department members are among the driving forces behind such incredible advancements. These are prospects that I could not have imagined back when I attended medical school. Lab Week is a good time to step back and remind ourselves that the daily work piling up on our desks, screens, and benches is in service of this greater good to our patients—to continue to make such breakthroughs happen together, one clue, one test, one result, and one discovery at a time.

In this spirit, happy Lab Week 2016 to all of you!

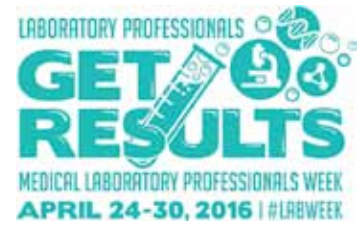
Sincerely,

David B. Roth, MD, PhD

# Laboratory Professionals Week Schedule at HUP and Pennsylvania Hospital

2016 Lab Week is April 25 to 30

Please join the Department of Pathology and Laboratory Medicine in celebrating Medical Laboratory Professionals Week to show our gratitude and appreciation to all laboratory professionals. We celebrate the hard work and dedication by the more than 600 laboratory professionals in more than 30 different laboratories across Penn Medicine. Honor yourself and your colleagues for being a vital part of the lab community!



## HUP Lab Week ACTIVITIES CALENDAR

### EVERY DAY

- **Lab Week Games!**
- **Lab Week Contests**
  - Decorate your Door Challenge
  - Dessert Competition

### MONDAY 4/25

- **Lab Week gifts and buttons distributed**, 6 Gates  
8:30 am to 9:30 am *(Please send a representative from each lab/section for pickup)*
- **Lab week Luncheon**, Miller Plaza (Giant Pyramid)  
1 pm to 5 pm\*  
*\*or rainy day alternative*

### TUESDAY 4/26

- **Basket Raffle**, PCAM  
10:30 am to 2 pm
- **Kedrion Biopharma Inc. Lunch and Learn**  
Transfusion Medicine 3 White CR  
11:45 am to 1 pm  
Topic TBD
- **Roche Lunch And Learn**, 7 Founders Conference Room  
12 noon to 12:30 pm and 1 pm to 1:30 pm  
Topic: Roche Futures Webinar
- **“State of the Department” Kick-off Event with Chair Dr. David Roth and HUP Chief Operating Officer Carolyn Jackson**  
6 Founders Conference Room  
9:30 am to 10:00 am and 3 pm to 3:30 pm  
*Please attend one of the two times*

### WEDNESDAY 4/27

- **Beckman Breakfast and Learn**, 7 Founders Conference Room  
7:30 am to 8 am and 8 am to 8:30 am  
Topic TBD
- **Basket Raffle**, Ravdin Mezzanine  
10:30 am to 2 pm
- **Beckman Lunch and Learn**, 7th Floor Conference Room  
11:45 am to 12:30 pm and 12:30 pm to 1:15 pm  
Topic TBD
- **Dessert Contest** (All varieties of dessert welcome!)  
7 Founders Conference Room  
3:30 pm to 5 pm  
*(All desserts can be brought to the conference room at 2:15pm)*

### THURSDAY 4/28

- **Candy Gram Distribution**
- **Basket Raffle**: Ravdin Mezzanine,  
10:30 am to 2:30 pm  
Raffle winners announced at 3 pm!
- **PLM PathFinders Lab Week 5K run / 1.5 mile walk**  
*Meet on Spruce Street sidewalk near the Gates Entrance at 5 pm*

### FRIDAY 4/29

- **“Decorate Your Door Challenge”**  
10 am to noon, HUP  
with judges PLM COO Robert Challender and  
HUP Associate Executive Director of Operations John Kirby  
Winner announced
- **PL & M Happy Hour**, Landmark Americana, 3333 Market Street  
4:30 pm to 7 pm  
*Hors d'oeuvres and beverage specials*

## PAH Lab Week ACTIVITIES SUMMARY

The PAH Lab Week Committee reports on their happenings for this year: Medical Laboratory Professionals Week (MLPW) is celebrating its 41st year! Here at PAH, we are excited to reward and celebrate the diligent efforts of our laboratory professionals and bring awareness to the importance of their labor. This year we are “Diagnosis Detectives” who solve patient cases one test at a time and “Get Results.” At PAH, we are striving to increase patient awareness and gain recognition for our profession by celebrating Lab Week in the following ways:

### PATIENT AWARENESS

- Hosting monthly Bake Sales and biweekly 50/50 raffles that raise funds for Lab Week; half of the proceeds have been donated to the JustFightfoundation.org and Pancreatic Cancer charities.
- Displaying poster boards and table tents in the cafeteria that explain who we are and what we do and using photographs to detail the journey of a lab specimen.
- Providing tours for Penn Charter High School students, giving them the opportunity to walk through our lab and educate them about the importance of the medical laboratory profession.
- Basket raffle: all PAH employees will have the opportunity to visit our labs, purchase tickets and have the ability to win a themed basket filled with lots of goodies at the end of the week!
- Mayor Proclamation: we applied for a signed letter recognizing MLPW from Mayor Jim Kenney of Philadelphia with the hope to publicly display it for all PAH guests and staff to see.

### CELEBRATIONS FOR THE PROFESSIONAL

- Games and activities Mon-Fri! Each lab section picks a day; all lab employees can participate and win prizes and tickets that can be used towards our Basket Raffle
- Ice cream social
- Phillies Hot Dog Day
- Lab Derby Day
- Continuing Education Opportunities
- Lab After Hours Happy Hour at Strangelove's in Philadelphia  
5 pm to 7 pm

# MILESTONES & Achievements

Recently, volunteers from the Pathology and Laboratory Medicine community came together for a “Peanut Butter and Jelly Day.” On this day, Department members managed to make roughly 400 sandwiches from 60 loaves of bread, 35 jars of peanut butter, and 25 jars of jelly for the non-profit organization Project Endless Agapé. The sandwiches were part of the efforts by Endless Agapé volunteers who regularly distribute water, food, toiletries and other materials to the homeless and the



needy in Philadelphia, Camden, and Atlantic City. Thanks so much to everyone who donated and participated! And a special “thank you” to **Kelly Graf**, Autolab Technologist, who personally dropped off all of the sandwiches to our friends at Endless Agapé in a night of heavy snowfall.

Pathology and Laboratory Medicine at PPMC was part of the annual Patient Safety Awareness Week that calls attention to the culture of safety throughout Penn Medicine. This year’s contribution to the PPMC Safety Fair was an exhibit outlining specimen labeling because “We All Win with Proper Labelin’.” Pictured here are, from left to right, **Hugh Nugent**, Central Receiving & Processing Tech, **Roxan Reynolds**, Supervisor of Transfusion Service, **Tamika Tillery**, Supervisor of Central Receiving & Processing, and **Lisa Walker**, Central Receiving & Processing Tech.



The Blood Bank can look back on a very successful year, so the supervisors created a poster “50 Shades of Red” for the break room. The poster commemorates a number of achievements by **Jennifer Marchesano**, **Vrunda Patel**, **Mike Stetz**, **Raeann Thomas** and the whole Blood Bank team: it includes successful completion of the FDA, AABB, and CAP inspections; 100% on CAP

proficiency testing; completion of the OR product delivery project; and an annual total of 88,883 products issued. In addition, the Blood Bank welcomed four new employees: **Sara Goldston**, **Christine Thompson**, **Tori Gawel**, and **Tiffani Richardson**.

The 2015 graduating class of Pennsylvania Hospital’s School of Medical Laboratory Science (MLS) achieved outstanding results on the national certification exam! The American Society of Clinical Pathology (ASCP) releases annual statistics on first time examinee scores for the MLS Board of Certification



(BOC) exam at the end of January. Statistics from university and hospital MLS programs are reported, with hospital programs consistently scoring higher than university programs. The MLS Class of 2015 scored higher than the national and hospital program statistics on their over-

*continued on back page*

## IN MEMORIAM

### George J. Merva



George Merva, a laboratory administrator in the Department of Pathology and Laboratory Medicine from 1953 to 2011, passed away on March 11, 2016. His service for more than half a century impacted everyone in the Department, from medical students, research administrators, laboratory staff, principal investigators, faculty members, to Department Chairs. George was lovingly known as the Department’s “forever” fixture, an all-around “go-to” man, and a polymath for the labs in the John Morgan Building; his entire life was dedicated to supporting the Department.

George was the oldest son of a coal miner and his wife, and one of seven children. Born in Morrisdale, Pennsylvania, he enlisted in the Marines towards the end of World War II. After the war ended, he was stationed in Philadelphia at the Navy Yard. He remained in the reserves and went to officer’s training, finishing his service as a second lieutenant. He went to college in Philadelphia and graduated from the University of Pennsylvania in 1955. At Penn he also met Josephine Mariana, a registered nurse who had trained at the old Philadelphia General Hospital and his future wife of more than four decades.

For many years, he put together the course guide for Pathology 101. Known to hundreds of medical students and many researchers and faculty, he was instrumental in creating the student course-evaluation forms (Hamster); before the advent of computers, he collated all the statistics *by hand* for years! George was also a true medical-history buff: he was responsible for salvaging precious 19th-century wax anatomy models, some of which are now part of the Mütter Museum of The College of Physicians of Philadelphia. Fittingly for a former Marine, he retired from Penn at age 84, on Veteran’s Day 2011.

George is survived by six children and three grandchildren. He enjoyed hunting and camping with his sons at Black Moshannon Pennsylvania State Park near Philipsburg, not far from where he grew up. Donations in his honor may be made to the “Friends of Black Moshannon” at <http://bit.ly/merva-donation>

*Milestones and Achievements continued from page 3*

all score and for all seven of the subsections of the exam. Robert Challender, Chief Operating Officer & Corporate Director Laboratory Services for the Department, commented: "These are great results. I know hearing from the operations managers at HUP that the quality of students coming from the program is top-notch, which is a tribute to the great program you all run."

Eight of the nine 2015 graduates work for UPHS at HUP, PAH, and Radnor. From left to right in the picture: Kimi Patel, who relocated to Texas, Coral Holly, Core Lab, Christine Thompson, Blood Bank, Fathma Abdalla, Microbiology, Kelly King, Special Coagulation, Karen Gassmann, Core Lab, Jenni Asterino, Microbiology, Tori Gawel, Blood Bank, and Ryan Stetz, Microbiology.

## BLAST from the Past



For Lab Week 2012, technologists from a whole range of clinical laboratories got together for a "Morning Wake Up Call" on NBC10 Philadelphia. Representing all lab professionals across Penn Medicine were members of the Immunology/HLA Lab, Autolab, Central Receiving and Processing, STAT Lab, Molecular Pathology, Endocrinology, Microbiology, Toxicology, Coagulation, Transfusion, Phlebotomy, the Blood Bank, and Point-of-Care Testing. The wakeup clips aired more than half a dozen times between 5 and 7 am during Lab Week and beyond.

## UPCOMING EVENTS & ACTIVITIES

### New! PLM PathFinders 1.5 mile walk/5K run group

Every 4th Thursday of every month at 5 pm starting April 28.

Meet near HUP Gates entrance on Spruce Street.

For more information, email [Kaitlin.Novelli@uphs.upenn.edu](mailto:Kaitlin.Novelli@uphs.upenn.edu)

### New! Monthly Meditation

Open to all Department members

Every 4th Wednesday

from 7:45 am to 8 am

7 Founders Conference Room

Every 3rd Friday

from 1 pm to 1:15 pm

6 Founders Conference Room

Hosted by Beth Lussier, a certified yoga instructor with experience in guided meditation

The Department of Pathology and Laboratory Medicine

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