Dear Members of the Division of Precision and Computational Diagnostics (PCD),

Welcome to the eighth issue of our Divisional Newsletter. The last quarter was filled with a significant number of activities, events and inclusion of new Divisional personnel. We are excited to be joined by Safoora Deihimi, who will be working with Chris Orr in our variant analysis team. This is an important position for us and addresses a critical need in our daily work activities in the CPD.

Our next generation sequencing translocation panel introduced last summer is gaining increasing utilization and yielding results that benefit our patients. This test detects several translocations that are clinically relevant in lung cancer, thyroid cancer and solid tumors. We were honored to host Regina Cunningham, PhD, RN, NEA-BC, FAAN, Chief Executive Officer of the Hospital of the University of Pennsylvania at the CPD. Dr. Cunningham is a strong proponent of molecular medicine and toured the CPD. On behalf of faculty and staff of the Division, I extended our gratitude for her support for our mission to improve patient care by genomics testing.

Our division was abundantly represented at the recently concluded (Nov 16-18, 2017) annual meeting of the Association for Molecular Pathology (AMP) in Salt Lake City. Numerous posters were presented by our trainees and staff, and Dr. Vivianna Van Deerlin gave a well-received seminar entitled: Genetics of ALS Spectrum Disorders: Implications for Molecular Diagnosis and Genetic Counseling. We were all thrilled to acknowledge the breadth and depth of the participation of the University of Pennsylvania team and our previous trainees. The current and previous members of the UPenn team also attended a party at the meeting which was very well attended. Finally, I assumed the position of the President of the AMP (2017-2018) and succeeding Dr. Federico Monzon who served with distinction.

Please continue to offer ideas for activities that demonstrate the impact of the PCD to patient care at HUP.

Best wishes to all for a Happy and bountiful Thanksgiving and holiday season!

Kojo S. J. Elenitoba-Johnson, M.D.

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MolPa Jokesters

A Frog goes into a bank and approaches the teller. He can see from her nameplate that her name is Patricia Whack. "Miss Whack, I’d like to get a $30,000 loan to take a holiday. Patty looks at the frog in disbelief and asks his name. The frog says his name is Kermit Jagger, his dad is Mick Jagger, and that it’s okay, he knows the bank manager. Patty explains that she will need to secure the loan with some collateral. The frog says, "Sure. I have this," and produces a tiny porcelain elephant, about an inch tall, bright pink and perfectly formed. Very confused, Patty explains that she’ll have to consult with the bank manager and disappears into a back office. She finds the manager and says, “There’s a frog called Kermit Jagger out there who claims to know you and wants to borrow $30,000, and he wants to use this as collateral.” She holds up the tiny pink elephant. “I mean, what in the world is this?” The bank manager looks back at her and says...

"It’s a knickknack, Patty Whack. Give the frog a loan. His old man’s a rolling stone."

(Alicia Carlin)
PCD Presentations

Robyn Sussman, PhD, delivered a platform presentation at the Agilent Cancer Summit on Wednesday, October 11, 2017. Her presentation covered the evolution of solid tumor sequencing at the CPD and how the CPD has taken advantage of the big data being produced by our newer, larger solid tumor panel (Solid V2). The symposium was held at The Mutter Museum of The College of Physicians in Philadelphia, PA.

Carmela Paolillo, PhD, and Amanda Oran, PhD, both CPD Post-doctoral fellows, presented posters at The Sixteenth Annual Penn Biomedical Postdoctoral Research Symposium on October 24, 2017, located at the Smilow Research Center. They were able to show their work to the wider Penn community and practice for their upcoming presentations at the Association for Molecular Pathology Annual Meeting!

Ashkan Bigdeli, MS, presented a poster entitled “Assessing Copy Number Variation Methods in Amplicon Next-Generation Sequencing” at the 2nd annual MidAtlantic Bioinformatics Conference on Tuesday October 10, 2017. The conference, which is held by the Department of Biomedical and Health Informatics (DBHi) at the Children’s Hospital of Philadelphia and Penn's Institute for Biomedical Informatics (IBI), focused on epigenetics and chromatin organization.

Welcome New Members!

Safoora Deihimi has joined the Center for Personalized Diagnostics as a Genomic Variant Analyst. She completed her BS in Biotechnology and MS in Genetics in Iran. After she worked as a Genetic Analysis Technician in Shiraz Institute for Cancer Research, she came to the United States to get further training in Oncology. Safoora is a graduate of Drexel University College of Medicine with a Master of Science in Cancer Biology. She worked in a translational lab at Fox Chase Cancer Center where she studied the mutation data signatures of colorectal cancer patients. Safoora is a cuisine explorer and enjoys cooking, traveling, and photography.
The PCD social committee would like to thank everyone and their families for coming out to the Renaissance Faire and making this event a success! We hope to go back again next year and hope everyone can join us. Good day!

Best PCD costume was Joe Milano!

Best family costume was the Gentile family and friends!
News & Newsworthy

Dr. Vonderheide visits the PCD

Dr. Robert Vonderheide, the newly-appointed Director of the Abramson Cancer Center (ACC) and a Professor in Cancer Research, visited the laboratories at 3020 Market St. this past September. Dr. Elenitoba-Johnson led a tour of the facilities and informed Dr. Vonderheide of the exciting diagnostics happening in the PCD. We welcome him back for a visit anytime!

Molecular Pathology members Brittany Warner, Gary Tang, and Jennifer Smith, along with their families, joined Path and Lab Medicine at the heart walk!

On Behalf of the Lab Activities Committee: We are so proud to announce the 2017 Path and Lab Cardiac Chargers Heart Walk team raised over $15,400 for the American Heart Association, bringing our 5 year fundraising total to almost $66,000!! Thank you for all who supported and joined our Heart Walk team and the cause.

Special thanks to our top fundraisers and PLM leaders this year – Dr. Michael Feldman, Laura Pritchard, Steve Krauss, Jenna Fetters and Jeanne Keller. You are all amazing.

August celebrated “Tell a Joke Day,” so MolPa compiled their favorite jokes for you to enjoy! And they’re still joking!

Why couldn’t the basketball keep a serious relationship?
*It was on the rebound.*

(Brittany Warner)

How do you make a squid laugh?
*Give him tentacles.*

(Chris Watt)

If you need an arc built, I Noah guy.

(Jennifer Smith)

Contributors

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Do you have comments, suggestions, or content for the newsletter? Please contact Jackie Roth or Laura Pritchard; jacquelyn.roth@uphs.upenn.edu or lara.pritchard@uphs.upenn.edu