

Penn Medicine Pathology & Laboratory Medicine REPORT

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Department of Pathology
and Laboratory Medicine*

CONTENTS

Chair's Column

Milestones and Achievements

In the Spotlight:

2016 Spirit of Caring Award
for Joe DiRienzi and Igor Tsimberg

Department Trivia:
Did You Know?

Blast from the Past

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Chair's Column

David B. Roth, MD, PhD

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

As you get older, it becomes more and more startling how fast time flies. Even though it seems like only yesterday that I arrived to take the helm of the Department of Pathology and Laboratory Medicine, I am now starting my sixth year as the Chair of this Department. At Penn, it is customary that each Chair's performance is reviewed after five years into his or her tenure, so we are now embarking on a year-long review held by the Dean's office to evaluate what we have accomplished over the last five years and what our plans are for the upcoming years.

We spent the summer getting ready for this review process and put together a document for the Dean that gives an overview of all of our operations in the clinical, research, and education missions. The final document clocked in at 225 pages! This is a tribute to the complexity and scale of our operations, but it also calls attention to the fact how crucial we are to the Health System overall. Indeed, I am pleased to report that our review document makes it abundantly clear that the Department provides outstanding cutting-edge and state-of-the-art diagnostics to UPHS in service of all of its patients. We are truly the backbone of Penn Medicine.

Our review document also addresses our plans to develop the technology-based lab of the future, derived from the conclusions of the ongoing needs analysis we are conducting. We need to make sure that the lab is fully integrated as part of the patient care of the future. As part of this integration, we have already expanded the off-site laboratory footprint for Penn Medicine in the Pennsylvania suburbs at Radnor and Valley Forge, as well as in Bucks County, Chester County, Exton, and Kenneth Square; in New Jersey at Woodbury and Cherry Hill; and in Philadelphia with locations in University City, the Farm Journal building and Washington Square in Center City. These expansions serve to strengthen the Health System's position within the market by assuring the continuum of care.

We will also invest in digital pathology, pathology informatics, and deep analytics that will enhance our ability to project our advanced diagnostic capabilities across the Health System and allow us to streamline our workflows and make physicians and other medical professionals more efficient. All of you are an integral part of these efforts.

In fact, since I arrived here in 2011, the number of clinical laboratory staff at Philadelphia-based Hospitals has grown from 560 to 620, highlighting how many of us it takes to make this Department work at its best every day.

Sincerely,

David B. Roth, MD, PhD

Milestones & ACHIEVEMENTS

Penn Medicine Cherry Hill, a new 150,000 square foot outpatient facility, recently celebrated its opening with a ribbon cutting at its location at 1865 Route 70 East in Cherry Hill, NJ. With 28 specialties and expanded radiology and laboratory offerings in one building, the new facility allows patients to see their primary care doctor or a specialist, receive lab work, radiology services, and even pick up their prescriptions, all in one location. The Cherry Hill site offers phlebotomy, a diagnostic lab, and FNA support via telepathology and is expected to accommodate approximately 30,000 lab visits annually. An expanded Test Menu Analytical Lab was added to support the on-site cancer center. Some highlights of what the building has to offer:

- Centralized check-in for a more efficient check-in experience
- Access to 28 different specialties within one facility
- On-site café, retail pharmacy, expanded laboratory, and full radiology services
- Parking garage with more than 400 available spaces and ample handicapped parking



Welcoming patients at Cherry Hill in this photo are, from left to right, Jennifer Bond, Ashley Hutchinson, Joyce Halliday (supervisor for the lab), and Karena Jennings.

The Department of Pathology and Lab Medicine at PPMC led the implementation of the departmental services in the building; the process was a true collaborative and integrated effort between various members of the lab integration team, the frontline staff and various lab supervisors, especially **Pat Abbott, Penny Sevin, Roxan Reynolds,**

Onnette Joaquin, Joyce Halliday, Michael Atweh and many others who worked tirelessly on this project for the past two years.



One of the charge nurses in the Transfusion and Apheresis Services, **Lita Jamensky, BSN, RN**, was recently promoted to Clinical Nurse III as part of Penn Medicine's Nursing Clinical Advancement and Recognition Program (CARP), which is designed to recognize clinical nurses for their contributions to quality patient care, including clinical knowledge and professional achievements. Lita is the first of the Apheresis nurses to advance from Level II to Level III, based on her refined knowledge, skills

and behaviors. Advancement to Level III is not automatic; it requires the creation of a professional development portfolio, and the CARP Committee reviews every application. As part of Lita's recent accomplishments, she co-authored four peer-reviewed papers and co-designed and co-authored the National Thrombotic Thrombocytopenic Purpura Registry.

Darrin Jengehino, Technical Specialist in Hematopathology at HUP, was the recipient of this year's Residents Award. This honor is awarded to a technologist or PA in Clinical or Anatomic Pathology to recognize their outstanding dedication to teaching and improving resident training in their area of expertise. The residents nominated Darrin because of his contagious enthusiasm and unique approach to teaching, which "plays an integral part in sustaining the team's morale, especially during challenging times."

Every year, starting in late August through mid-December, the Department contributes significantly to the community service aspect of the Penn Medicine Mission. We do this through our participation in Penn's Way, contributions to multiple awareness walks – such as the Heart Walk & Light the Night, and by volunteering our time to local organizations like MANNA. Collectively, our contributions continue to have a broad and immediate effect on our community.

Due to the generosity of the PLM faculty and staff across all entities, the Penn's Way Campaign generates thousands of dollars for the vulnerable populations we serve. Moreover, our Department's fundraising efforts for the Heart Walk have raised more than \$50,000 in the last four years for the American Heart Association (AHA). These funds provided the AHA with the resources to educate over 250,000 children on the importance of heart health. To put that number into perspective, that is enough children to fill Citizens Bank Park, almost six times. In addition, the Department participated and contributed over \$1,200 for the Light the Night Walk which benefits the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society (LLS). The LLS ensures patients have access to the care they need and supports pertinent research for Leukemia and Lymphoma. Our contributions to these initiatives and others like these, illustrate we are united in our passion for making our communities, our country and our planet a better place. —Nichole Howard



Lighting up the night are, from left to right, Suanne Gardiner, Vanessa Dupoux, Alexa Koike, Darrin Jengehino, and Nichole Howard.

2016 Spirit of Caring Award for Joe DiRienzi and Igor Tsimberg



Joe DiRienzi, PA(ASCP), Pathologists' Assistant and Medical Pathology Coordinator, and **Igor Tsimberg, PA, ASCP, AAPA**, Pathologists' Assistant in Medical Pathology, are the recipients of this year's Spirit of Caring Award,

presented annually by the Department of Pastoral Care and Education. For over twenty years, the Spirit of Caring Award has honored individuals who offer outstanding service at the Hospital of the University of Pennsylvania by ministering to the spirit of patients, family, or staff with kindness and compassion as part of the Hospital's clinical healing mission. The Rev. Jim Browning, Director of Pastoral Care, recognized Joe and Igor for the care and comfort they give to families of decedents during viewings at the morgue.

Joe and Igor are both ASCP-certified Pathologists' Assistants with more than fifty years of experience between them. Joe has been at HUP for 37 years and Igor joined him 18 years ago. They perform about 200 autopsies a year in the morgue, sometimes three or four on a busy day, but there is a dimension to their work that goes far beyond the technical skills required for autopsies and it is not something you can easily learn. Many times, families request a final viewing after a loved one dies. Igor and Joe are the ones who prepare the family members for the experience step-by-step beforehand and provide a calm and comforting presence for them during the time of the viewing. "We are there for them at any time, at night, in the evenings or on weekends," says Igor, "whenever a viewing is requested."

Dr. Leslie Litzky, Director of Medical Pathology, notes that "Joe and Igor are incredibly brave and compassionate. They always go out of their way to treat each person who comes down with respect." Indeed, she continues, "the autopsy suite is a place of great dignity. What they do is exceptional. We get letters from grateful families." Chris Mignogna, MPH, Technical Operations manager, adds: "Joe and Igor make a difference with everyone and make a lasting impact on families. They

never hesitate to listen and console. They are always ready to provide information and help ... they genuinely care."

It is this empathy and compassion for those who come down to the morgue that makes their work so much more important than the mere mechanics of an autopsy. As Joe puts it, "You know how they say in your job description '...and other duties'? Well, this is the 'other stuff' that you can't teach someone. You have to imagine this is your own loved one and just try to be there for the family members." Igor adds that this kind of considerate understanding of what people need in a time of grief "comes with age, a certain mindset, and with experience." Both Joe and Igor are struck by how often their visitors will ask them to "please take care" of their loved ones: "We always tell them, don't worry, they are our family now and that comforts them." The Department of Pathology and Laboratory Medicine is lucky to have two kindhearted colleagues with Joe and Igor who demonstrate every day that the genuine spirit of caring encompasses both the dignified treatment of the deceased and the compassionate treatment of those who are forced to say goodbye.

— Daniel H. Wild



(From left to right) Hamid Moattari and Chris Mignogna of Anatomic Pathology, Joseph DiRienzi, Dr. Leslie Litzky, and Igor Tsimberg at the Spirit of Caring Award ceremony

DEPARTMENT TRIVIA:

Did You Know?

The laboratories at Pennsylvania Hospital are officially called the Ayer Laboratories in memory of Josephine Mellen Ayer (1827-1898), who bequeathed \$50,000 in her will (about \$1.4 million in today's dollars) to Pennsylvania Hospital for the construction of a new clinical laboratory. Her son Frederick Fanning Ayer also donated to the building and established an endowment for the publication of an annual Bulletin of the Ayer Clinical Laboratory.

Mrs. Mellen Ayer was a philanthropist who lived in New York

and Paris. Upon her death, the *New York Times* Paris correspondent called her a "Lady Bountiful of



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tireless generosity." Her husband, James Cook Ayer, was a graduate of the medical school at the Uni-

versity of Pennsylvania and made his fortune as an apothecary selling patent medicines such as "Ayer's Cherry Pectoral," "Ayer's Cathartic Pills," "Ayer's Sarsaparilla," and "Ayer's Hair Vigor." He later invested in railroads, timberlands, and textile mills. At the time of his death in 1878, he was planning a project to construct an interoceanic canal between Panama and Tehuantepec in Mexico.

A 1950s entry in the Biographical Memoirs of the National Academy of Sciences notes that with the construction of the Ayer Lab

Continues on page 4

at PAH in 1898, “the harbinger of a new place for the laboratory in clinical medicine had arrived.” Today, the Ayer Laboratories at Pennsylvania Hospital are comprised of the Laboratory Medicine sections (Chemistry, Hematology, Microbiology, Blood Bank, Point of Care, and the Lab at the Farm Journal Building; and supportive sections such as Central Processing, Point of Care, Phlebotomy) and the Anatomic Pathology sections (Surgical Pathology, Cytology, and Autopsy).



Ayer Lab Staff, 1926 (Image courtesy of Stacey Peeples, Pennsylvania Hospital Historic Collections)

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BLAST FROM THE PAST



Hospital of the University of Pennsylvania, pathology organ recital for medical students, circa 1962, with Dr. Arnold J. Rawson, standing left.

Dr. Arnold J. Rawson, emeritus professor of pathology and acting Chair from 1979 to 1980, died in 2014 at age 99. He completed his residency in pathology at the Hospital of the University of Pennsylvania. His twin passions were teaching and research. He was noted for teaching the required course in pathology to all students and for winning the Lindback Award for Distinguished Teaching in 1972.

Image from the collection of Dr. Crawford Dick Park, courtesy of the University of Pennsylvania Archives

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