

# President's Column

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During the last quarter, the ASHI Board of Directors and the Executive Committee have been involved in many activities pertaining to professional practices and scientific activities. We have also engaged in interactions with other professional organizations. A summary of some of these activities and ongoing projects is listed below.

## *Transplantation Histocompatibility Conference*

The first Transplantation Histocompatibility Conference, jointly sponsored by ASHI, ASTS, AST, UNOS, ISHLT, and NIH, was held in Chicago March 3-4, 2008, and focused on HLA antibody testing using solid-phase methodologies. In this issue, Dr. Deborah Crowe summarizes this conference. A second Transplantation Histocompatibility Conference, sponsored by ASHI, is scheduled for November 2010 in St. Louis prior to the OPTN/UNOS Board of Directors Meeting.

## *Harmonization of Histocompatibility Testing Standards*

ASHI organized a task force for the harmonization of histocompatibility testing standards. This task force includes representatives of EFI, FACT, AABB, WMDA, NMDP, CAP and ASHI (Dawn Wagenknecht, Cyndi Taves, and Marcelo Fernandez-Viña). The initial activities focused on finding a consensus of definitions and concepts of activities involved in histocompatibility testing for hematopoietic stem cell transplantation. This forum opens communications that will allow timely comments on updates of the standards of different accrediting agencies.

## *Financially Compensating Stem Cell Donors*

Several institutions and organizations oppose the proposal to financially compensate hematopoietic stem cell donors at the time of donation. We have received requests from members of the histocompatibility community to join with the National Marrow Donor Program (NMDP), America's Blood Centers (ABC), AABB (formerly American Association of Blood Banks), American Society for Bone Marrow Transplantation, International Society of Cellular Therapy, American Society of Transplantation, and the World Marrow Donor Association to take a stand against any change in the law. Our opposition is based on safety, ethical, and practical concerns regarding compensation. These concerns include the possibility that a donor would fail to disclose important personal health or history information that may affect the safety of either the donor or patient. In addition, ethical concerns such as the potential for extortion are raised.

## *CPT Codes for Histocompatibility Testing*

Dr. Sandra Helman has been actively working as ASHI's representative on the Molecular Pathology Coding Workgroup (MPCW). New codes for histocompatibility tests were assigned last year and additional codes are being developed. ASHI has participated in a newly formed work group within the MPCW. The MPCW's charge is to explore potential long-range solutions to the current problems related to CPT coding for non-infectious disease molecular pathology procedures and present recommended solutions to the CPT Editorial Panel in a timeline that may allow a useable coding solution in 2012. Dr. Deborah Crowe, Dr. Sandra Helman, Dr. Robert Bray, and Dr. Geoffrey Land are representing ASHI in this work group.

## *Proficiency Testing Program*

ASHI has made investments for the development of new software; the milestones set for this project have been reached according to the schedule. The project should be finalized by the end of the current fiscal year.

## *UNOS Policy Proposals are Open for Public Comment*

Ten policy proposals are now being offered for public comment. These proposals were developed by the OPTN/UNOS committee. The public comment period ends July 16, 2010. The UNOS Histocompatibility Committee has developed two proposals that are open for comments ("Proposal to Update HLA Equivalences Tables" and "Proposal to Require that Deceased Donor HLA Typing be Performed by DNA Methods and Identify Additional Antigens for Kidney, Kidney-pancreas, Pancreas, and Pancreas Islet Offers"). The ASHI Executive Committee supports the proposals and will submit comments stating ASHI's position. We encourage ASHI members to read and submit comments as well.

## *ASHI Financial Activity for 2009*

This report is based on unaudited financial information. Overall, ASHI ended the year positively and exceeded the budget on operating income and expenses with a total net operating income of approximately \$32,000. If investment income is considered, the net revenue exceeds budget by approximately \$200,000.

There are many activities ongoing in our Society. The plans for ASHI's Annual Meeting are being finalized. Most invited speakers have confirmed their participation. We anticipate that this meeting will be another success! We look forward to seeing you at the Regional Workshops or at the Annual Meeting in Hollywood, Fla.