Women’s Health Proponents Laura W. Bush and Barbara Bush to Speak at 2012 ASCP Annual Meeting

Laura W. Bush, former First Lady, and Barbara Bush, Founder and CEO of Global Health Corps, will be featured at the 2012 American Society for Clinical Pathology (ASCP) Annual Meeting, Nov. 1, in Boston. Both are proponents for women’s health and are actively engaged with the Pink Ribbon Red Ribbon Initiative.

Through the George W. Bush Institute, Mrs. Bush and Barbara Bush participated in the recent launch of the Pink Ribbon Red Ribbon partnership to expand critically needed breast and cervical cancer interventions in sub-Saharan Africa and Latin America. The cervical cancer partnership will leverage the platform and resources of the President’s Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR)—established under President George W. Bush and a cornerstone of President Barack Obama’s Global Health Initiative—and will draw from lessons learned in the significant scaling up of access to human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) interventions since June 2004.

“ASCP shares Laura Bush’s and Barbara Bush’s commitment to global health,” said ASCP President C. Bruce Alexander, MD, FASCP. “We applaud them for their part in the Bush Institute’s bold and visionary creation of the Pink Ribbon Red Ribbon Initiative with their public and private partners.”

Similarly, ASCP is developing a program to establish and sustain new cervical cancer prevention and treatment programs, as well as strengthen existing programs, in medically underdeveloped African countries, as well as other countries of need. Since 2005, ASCP has been involved in PEPFAR and has received funding annually from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) for the Society’s volunteers to train thousands of laboratory professionals, improve medical laboratory curriculum, and strengthen laboratory standards in resource-limited countries, resulting in improved patient outcomes.

LabMedicine: New Leadership, New Plans for Engaging Print and Online Content

Dynamic changes are ahead for LabMedicine with a new Editor-in-Chief and a new Director of Scientific Journals. ASCP selected Roger L. Bertholf, PhD, as the Editor-in-Chief of LabMedicine for his extensive experience with medical journals, such as editorial board member for the Journal of Analytical Toxicology, co-editor of Chromatographic Methods in Clinical Chemistry and Toxicology, and prolific author of scientific papers. (See feature story about Dr. Bertholf on page 32.) In addition to Dr. Bertholf, ASCP chose Michelle Hoffman, MBA, for the new staff position of Director of Scientific Journals. She will oversee the work of the managing editors of ASCP’s three journals—American Journal of Clinical Pathology, LabMedicine, and Critical Values. Previously, she was Editorial Director, Pharmaceutical Drug Development and Manufacturing Group, at Advanstar Communications, Iselin, N.J. Starting this summer, LabMedicine will become the exclusive journal for laboratory professionals. Laboratory professional members will receive four issues of LabMedicine per year, as well as access to enriched content on a dynamic new website. Pathologist members will have full access to the new website and as well as the option to subscribe to the print edition.

ASCP Call for Abstracts Deadline: April 30

The April 30 deadline for abstracts at the 2012 ASCP Annual Meeting in Boston, Oct. 31–Nov. 2, is quickly approaching. For the first time, ASCP will accept Educational Practice Abstracts, as well as Laboratory Practice and Scientific Abstracts. All accepted abstracts will be presented as board posters, and some will also be selected for oral platform presentations. The 2012 abstract competitions will offer a wide variety of categories, including “Best Poster by a Resident,” “Best Education Practice Poster,” “Best Lab Practice Poster,” “Best Scientific Poster,” and “Best Oral Abstract.” The deadline to submit abstracts for the 2012 ASCP Annual Meeting is midnight April 30, 2012. Read more at http://bit.ly/yLAz2U.

ASCP Joins CGI to Tackle Workforce Shortage

ASCP has made a Commitment to Action at the 2011 Clinton Global Initiative (CGI) America Meeting in Chicago to alleviate the shortage of laboratory professionals. Expanding the Laboratory Workforce for the 21st Century is a five-year ASCP commitment to expand the capacity of the clinical laboratory workforce in the state of New York, with implications for future similar initiatives across the nation. ASCP’s commitment activities include the expansion of current...
educational programs, the development of curriculum for both classroom and distance learning, the establishment of a coordinated network of clinical rotation sites, the creation of an accelerated technician-to-technologist career pathway, and the development of an electronic instrumentation simulation laboratory. As a result of these activities, ASCP and its CGI partners seek to increase the number of graduating laboratory professionals in New York by approximately 10 percent each year over a five-year period. www.ascp.org/ClintonNY

MedPage Today Videos Feature ASCP and WASPaLM Leaders

MedPage Today Editor-at-Large George D. Lundberg, MD, MASC, interviewed John E. Tomaszewski, MD, FASCP, ASCP Immediate Past President, about molecular pathology and targeted diagnostics in a video interview posted Nov. 27 on MedPage Today. Dr. Tomaszewski discusses how understanding the molecular pathways that drive disease and coordinating them with image and structure allow pathologists to predict very specifically and precisely a patient’s prognosis and response to therapy. View videos of Dr. Tomaszewski and Dr. Blair Holladay, ASCP Executive Vice President; Michael Oellerich, MD, president of the World Association of Societies of Pathology and Laboratory Medicine; and Deiter Duff, MD, of the University of Missouri School of Medicine, Pathology, and Anatomical Sciences. These video interviews about the decline in autopsies in hospitals are part of a series called “Conversations with...” held during the 2011 ASCP Annual Meeting, Oct. 19–22, Las Vegas, with leaders of the Society. Go to http://bit.ly/sIHag2.

ASCP Joins Campaign to Improve Use of Medical Tests

ASCP has joined the ABIM Foundation’s campaign to start physicians, patients, and other healthcare stakeholders thinking and talking about the overuse or misuse of medical tests and procedures that provide little benefit and, in some instances, cause harm to patients. Called Choosing Wisely, the campaign will provide resources for consumers and physicians to engage in these important conversations. That means helping patients choose care that is supported by evidence, not duplicative of other tests and procedures already received, free from harm, and truly necessary. National medical specialty societies that join the campaign will identify five tests or procedures often used in their area, whose use could be debated. The resulting lists will spark conversations about the need or lack of need for many frequently ordered tests or treatments.

The following organizations joined the campaign in late 2011: American Academy of Allergy, Asthma & Immunology; American Academy of Family Physicians; American College of Cardiology; American College of Physicians; American College of Radiology; American Gastroenterological Association; American Society of Clinical Oncology; American Society of Nephrology; and the American Society of Nuclear Cardiology. Consumer Reports is also working with the campaign to develop and disseminate materials to patients to help them engage their physicians in these conversations and ask questions about these test and procedures. Additional partners were expected to be announced in early April.

Choosing Wisely is part of the ABIM Foundation’s goal of promoting wise choices by clinicians to improve health outcomes, provide patient-centered care that avoids unnecessary and even harmful interventions, and reduce the rapidly expanding costs of the healthcare system. www.choosingwisely.org.

ADVOCACY NEWS

ASCP, AIM Pressing for Reform of Self-Referral Law for Pathology Services

ASCP recently signed an Alliance for Integrity in Medicare (AIM) letter to key leaders in Congress as part of an effort to remove pathology services from the Stark Law’s In-office Ancillary Services (IOAS) Exception. The IOAS Exception outlines exceptions, or safe harbors, to the Stark Law’s ban on the self-referral of physician services. Removing pathology services from the exemption is intended to prevent inappropriate self-referral and potentially abusive billing of pathology services.

Congress Approves Physician Fee Fix Extension Bill, Cuts CLFS $2.7 Billion

ASCP members last week sent more than 3,600 letters urging Congress not to cut a $2.7 billion Medical Clinical Laboratory Fee Schedule (CLFS) and eliminate the technical component grandfather provision. ASCP wishes to thank the thousands of members who responded to the Feb. 16 ASCP Action Alert. On Feb. 17, Congress approved a compromise agreement to extend the payroll tax deduction and unemployment insurance. The measure also reverses a 27-percent cut in the Medicare a physician fee rate, which was scheduled to go into effect on March 1. While the reversal of the impending cut in physician payment rates is indeed welcome news, ASCP is greatly disappointed that Congress imposed a $2.7 billion cut in CLFS and eliminated the technical component grandfather provision to help pay for the physician fee fix. The technical component grandfather provision, which will end on July 1, allows independent clinical laboratories, under certain conditions, to bill Medicare for anatomic pathology services provided to hospital patients.

CORRECTION

In the January 2012 issue of Critical Values, the article “ASCP Certifications Open Doors to a Brighter Future” (page 24) incorrectly stated that “the Pathologists’ Assistant certification requires a bachelor’s degree and pathologists’ assistant internship.” The correct eligibility requirement to take the ASCP Board of Certification Pathologists’ Assistant (PA) certification examination is a bachelor’s degree from a regionally accredited college or university and successful completion of a National Accrediting Agency for Clinical Laboratory Sciences-accredited PA program within the past five years. Critical Values regrets the error.