This is my first bulletin as President, and I will endeavour to provide a monthly update on ACB activities and important events.

Restructuring of Pathology Networks in England

Members in England will be fully aware by now of the proposals for restructuring of laboratories into 29 consolidated networks, consisting of hub and spoke models ([https://improvement.nhs.uk/resources/pathology-networks](https://improvement.nhs.uk/resources/pathology-networks)). NHS Improvement has written to all Trust Chief Executives describing the proposed networks and asking for a rapid response. The intention is to reduce variation in service provision and to save at least £200M per year. While the Association was made aware of these proposals, we were not given an opportunity to amend them in any way. We have indicated our reservations about the timescale, the reliability of the data on which the proposals are based, and the possibility of making the proposed savings without a significant adverse impact on service provision. At this stage, the important response will come from Trust Chief Executives and it is crucial that Heads of Laboratories engage at this level to inform a Trust response and to suggest alternative approaches where appropriate.

Accreditation

In response to concerns expressed by members, I have had discussions with UKAS about variation between assessors and the process for extension to scope. In relation to the former, the UKAS Chief Executive would be happy to look at any examples which we could present, and has promised to address these. Details could be sent to me in the first instance. With regard to extension to scope, UKAS have highlighted the possibility of a laboratory applying for flexible scope as an alternative approach. The UKAS Chief Executive has promised that they will produce a briefing note on this to clarify the pathway involved. If any laboratories already have experience of this, it would be very helpful if they would be willing to share their experience of the process.

Diversity and Inclusion and our workforce survey

We are currently looking at Diversity and Inclusion within the ACB, with the aim of developing an implementation plan to ensure that the various structures of the Association accurately reflect our membership. Rachel Wilmot has been leading on this on our behalf, and along with Paul Newland is completing the Science Council Diversity and Inclusion Progression Framework to inform our future plans. In order to better characterise our membership base and to ensure that we can address the key elements of the framework, we have added a few additional questions to this year’s membership survey. I would like to encourage as many members as possible to complete this - the survey can be found at [https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/6D6L6R5](https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/6D6L6R5).

WISE Fellowship Programme

We would like to congratulate ACB member Lisa Ayers who has been appointed as one of four WISE Fellows for this year as part of the Chief Scientist Officer’s WISE Fellowship Programme for NHS England. Lisa works in clinical immunology in Oxford, and will write an article introducing herself in a forthcoming issue of ACB News. However, for those who can’t wait more information can be found at [https://www.wisecampaign.org.uk/about-us/wise-projects/csofellowships/cso-fellows-2017-2018](https://www.wisecampaign.org.uk/about-us/wise-projects/csofellowships/cso-fellows-2017-2018)

Finally, safe travelling to any ACB members who hope to attend the forthcoming IFCC Worldlab meeting in Durban. If anyone would like to volunteer to write an article about your experiences, please let me know!

Professor Ian S Young, President
Association for Clinical Biochemistry and Laboratory Medicine

Better Science, Better Testing, Better Care