



UCSF PATHOLOGY ALUMNI NEWSLETTER

ISSUE 7: APRIL 2020

Message from the Pathology Leadership

Dear Friends and Alumni,

This newsletter arrives to you under much different circumstances while we deal with the COVID-19 pandemic. Before updating you about our response, we want to start our letter with our hope that you and all you families, colleagues, and friends are staying safe. We also want to express our gratitude for all that you are doing at your own facilities, hospitals, and laboratories to aid in this international crisis.

Here at UCSF, our hospital and department leadership has been diligently working to develop an effective response, with the Parnassus site serving as the primary infectious disease site for the COVID-19 patient care. Within our department, our academic and hospital leadership, with the aid of our essential staff, at all sites have been working hard as a team to quickly develop entirely new approaches to providing services in pathology, which includes telecommuting when feasible, and when on site, to maintain safe distancing. This has meant cancelling physical gatherings, even including cancelling our annual May Current Issues in Anatomic Pathology for the first time in its 36 years. Our Residency and Surgical Pathology Fellowship directors completely revamped the residency schedule and encouraged clinical faculty to increase utilization of video conferencing. This has permitted us to enhance our educational opportunities for our residents who now can attend a variety of consensus conferences and clinical sign outs from any location. Our consultants continue to be available and we are still accepting personal consultation requests. We are fortunate that specimens from Mission Bay, Mt Zion and Parnassus sites can now be reviewed digitally, this includes access to all surgical pathology, cytology cell blocks and autopsy cases. This digital capability to review virtual slides is a cumulation of years of efforts by numerous individuals on many digital pathology teams to get a comprehensive digital pathology system set up (as Dr Zoltan Laszik wrote about in a previous newsletter). With this capability to essentially scan all slides, we are prepared for faculty review even from home. Concerted efforts by key organizations led to recent approval on March 26, 2020 from the Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) to allow greater flexibility administering the Clinical Laboratory Improvement Amendments of 1988 (CLIA). This temporary relaxation of CLIA requirements permits remote diagnosis of pathology cases digitally during the COVID-19 crisis. To reduce the workforce in accordance with the shelter in place policies throughout the state, the research division has ramped down to essential activities; at the same time, many of our researchers are actively seeking opportunities to assist in COVID-19 research response. We are immensely grateful to our dedicated AP laboratory staff who come in every day, as they are our lifeline to accomplishing our duties for our patients. Our heartfelt thanks to our hard-working, dedicated, and outstanding administrative staff who keep the department moving forward in this rapidly changing environment. We continue to be nimble, as we expect we will need to adapt and innovate to practice under these new and evolving conditions. We want to thank all our dedicated workforce here at UCSF for their efforts to implement and adapt to these major changes so quickly and effectively.

If we as a UCSF family continue to stay courageous, nimble, innovative, and compassionate as a community of pathologists, and stay vigilant about the health and safety of our loved ones and community, we will overcome this crisis. We wish each of you health now and into the future.

UCSF Department of Pathology Leadership

SPECIAL NEWS:

Current Issues Update

Dear Alumni Friends and Colleagues,

Given the rapidly evolving repercussions of the Coronavirus pandemic and the associated uncertainties, and most importantly, in the interest of the health and well-being of our faculty, course participants, staff, exhibitors, and the community, the Current Issues course co-chairs recently made the difficult decision to cancel this year's Current Issues in Anatomic Pathology conference for the first time in more than 35 years.

Preparing our course involves a great deal of time, effort, talent and creativity of many of our faculty, guest speakers, staff, event managers, and exhibitors. We're incredibly grateful to all those involved and deeply disappointed to not be able to hold the meeting as planned.

Rest assured, we are making every effort to offer the best of this year's program and other updates in next year's course, so please mark your calendar for next year's dates, May 26-29, 2021. We will continue to keep you posted on the upcoming program and hope that you will be able to join us.

For those who registered for this year's course, we hope you will be patient as the Office of CME processes a full refund of your registration fees. Due to the large number of refunds that will need to be processed, please allow several weeks for processing. In the meantime, please take steps to cancel your hotel (and travel/flight reservations if applicable). If you booked within the conference room block at the Parc 55 Hotel, your reservation may have already been cancelled. If you need to contact the hotel to confirm this, they can be reached at (415) 392-8000. If you have questions, please contact Ms. Jane Brooks at jane.brooks@ucsf.edu.

We believe it's essential that our faculty, staff, and our attendees who are in the healthcare field be available and healthy to serve their patients, communities, and families during this pandemic. We extend our heartfelt sympathies to everyone impacted by this global health and economic crisis and our gratitude to all front-line and supportive healthcare workers, our stakeholders, and our loyal supporters. We appreciate your patience and understanding and look forward to seeing you and bringing you world-class education in the near future.