

From the President's Desk

A global commitment to excellence

Emily E. Volk, MD

June 2023—I embarked this year on my first international travel as president of the CAP. Due to limitations from the pandemic, I haven't been able to do as much of this as some of my predecessors, but happily this year we seem to be finally coming out of the worst of it.

It was a tremendous honor to get to visit pathologists in Tokyo, Japan, and in Dubai, United Arab Emirates, earlier this year. Japan has a number of CAP-accredited reference labs, but the National Cancer Center Hospital East recently became the first hospital laboratory in the country to be fully CAP accredited. It was a privilege to have the opportunity to visit the hospital—one of the most important cancer hospitals in Japan—in part to celebrate the achievement. The CAP is so glad to be able to support those patients and the pathologists who care for them.

In Japan and Dubai, I met with CAP inspectors, including local pathologists and inspectors from the U.S. I was invited to speak to pathologists and laboratory scientists in both countries. At the CAP Education Day, I learned of pathologists who are championing environmental stewardship while still bringing cutting-edge pathology and laboratory medicine to patients in the Middle East. In Japan, I was invited to share the CAP's efforts in augmented intelligence and machine learning and hear from pathologists from Asia and Europe on their efforts in this arena. In both countries, I was struck by our commonly held value: the pursuit of excellence for our patients. That manifests through our joint commitment to the need for accreditation as a means of comparing laboratory performance in facilities around the world. It is a passion I have seen in so many pathologists to push each other toward better and better care for our patients.

The CAP has a global reach promoting excellence and consistency in laboratories everywhere. The reason that our global presence matters is because we value the opportunity to build on our common commitment to patient care and excellence in laboratory medicine no matter where we practice. This dedication to providing the most reliable results for our patients is what brings us together as pathologists. It is true in every culture and in every country, and we should be proud of that.



Dr. Volk

That's why I loved getting the chance to champion pathologists who are bringing CAP programs to Asia and the Middle East, and I hope to do so for many other regions. Two of the programs with the broadest reach include proficiency testing/external quality assessment, which is used by laboratories in more than 115 countries, and laboratory accreditation, which has been achieved by more than 8,000 laboratories in nearly 60 countries. CAP accreditation is not a requirement outside the U.S., so the labs that take on this process are going above and beyond to demonstrate their commitment to excellence.

Remarkably, CAP programs saw increased international demand throughout the pandemic, when it would have

been understandable for pathologists who are not required to participate in these programs to focus on the round-the-clock demand for COVID-19 testing and other results for critically ill patients. Nearly 200 new laboratories outside the U.S. achieved CAP accreditation for the first time in the past three years. The pandemic helped to shine a spotlight on the value of laboratory medicine and testing quality, and I believe that the CAP, pathologists, and patients around the world have benefited from that appreciation.

We must hold on to this momentum. As pathologists, we are duty-bound to patients. Our duty transcends language, culture, and geography. It's a dedication that resonates across our community and connects us wherever we are.

Dr. Volk welcomes communication from CAP members. Write to her at president@cap.org.