

Preface

ON BEHALF OF THE EDITORS, AUTHORS, and many reviewers I am pleased to introduce the 20th edition of the AABB *Technical Manual*. The *Technical Manual* conveys the latest information in blood banking/transfusion medicine along with well-established material. Using the model developed by previous editorial teams, when possible we paired new authors with seasoned veterans to bring a fresh perspective to the content. This also allows for continuity as new authors in the current edition move into the role of primary author for the next edition. I am grateful for the steady guidance and hard work of Associate Editors Meghan Delaney, DO, MPH; Sue Johnson, MSTM, MT(ASCP)SBB; and Louis Katz, MD. All of us were first-time editors of the *Technical Manual* and learned a great deal from AABB staff and the editors of past editions.

The *Technical Manual's* excellence is ensured by a stringent peer-review process. Each chapter underwent an initial review by the editors for content and style, followed by reviews from numerous AABB committee members who provided focused expertise as well as comments on readability. Compliance experts then conducted a final check to make sure we provided the most up-to-date information on the standards, guidance, and regulations that help govern the activities readers engage in. These extra steps provide a high level of confidence that the *Technical Manual* is a reliable resource for our community.

The overall structure and content of the *Technical Manual* is adjusted periodically by

survey responses and feedback from AABB membership. For the 19th edition several key measures were taken to focus the content and reduce redundancy. These measures were very successful and, as a result, few structural changes were necessary for this edition.

However, improvements in content continued unabated. Sue Johnson and the authors of the chapters on blood groups worked diligently to bring the book's terminology for blood group antigens more closely in line with official ISBT nomenclature. In fact, their work is already being used as an exemplar for other AABB publications. Chapters addressing topics that have evolved significantly since publication of the 19th edition underwent major revision. These expanded updates include content on massive transfusion, patient blood management, molecular testing, and relevant transfusion-transmitted disease. Other key updates involving several chapters resulted from the April 2020 release of new federal regulations on donor deferrals and subsequent revision of the donor history questionnaire.

The *Technical Manual* was in the final stages of production when the COVID-19 pandemic swept across the world. Not surprisingly, the pandemic had an impact on the book. First, we considered adding material about disaster preparedness, blood shortages, and convalescent plasma. However, the information was changing so rapidly that we felt pandemic-related content would be out of date by the time we went to press. Second, the final review meeting at the AABB office

was converted to a virtual remote process. It took longer, but I believe the results are equal in quality of outcome. The third impact also relates to remote working. Our community as a whole has developed and improved ways to benefit from access to online resources. Accordingly, the methods and appendices are now posted online, rather than loaded onto a USB flash card in a pocket adhered to the inside back cover. Readers who turn to the table of contents page for the methods will find the access code there. We hope that the pandemic will be resolved well before publication of the 21st edition, and that informa-

tion on the virus, treatment, blood collection challenges, and lessons learned can be included in that edition.

It has been a privilege to work with the talented and dedicated staff at AABB and the transfusion medicine/blood banking community that helped to produce this edition. On behalf of the editors, authors, and reviewers we hope you enjoy using the 20th edition of the *Technical Manual* and find it a useful reference tool.

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Editor in Chief