

2022 Meet our Authors



Nejela Almohanna M.A. is a Marketing and Communications Manager at the American Red Cross. She started her career focused on designing and implementing advocacy and communications strategies within the field of public health. At the Red Cross, she is responsible for evaluating, strategizing, and developing content to share the organization's mission and provide the highest value for hospital customers across the nation.



Erin Breisacher, MLS(ASCP)SBB is the Immunohematology Reference Laboratory Supervisor at the Virginia Region American Red Cross in Roanoke, Virginia. She earned her Bachelor of Science in Biology from the University of Michigan- Ann Arbor. After graduation she spent several years in Phoenix, AZ before moving to Roanoke where she completed the Medical Laboratory Science program at Jefferson College of Health Sciences. Erin started her laboratory career in the blood bank at a local level one trauma center in Roanoke. She began working at the American Red Cross in 2017 as an IRL bench technologist, obtained her Specialist in Blood Banking (SBB) certification in 2018, and is currently the IRL Supervisor. Outside of work, Erin enjoys mountain biking, trail running, rock climbing, and spending time with her chickens and dogs in the beautiful Blue Ridge Mountains.



Jamie Breon, BS BB(ASCP)^{CM} is the Lead Technologist at the Central Ohio Immunohematology Laboratory of the American Red Cross. She graduated from The Pennsylvania State University with a B.S. in Immunology and Infectious Disease. She began her career in 2012 as a Blood Bank Technologist I in Columbus, OH and received her BB(ASCP)^{CM} in 2014.



Bethany Brown, PhD, MSCS is the Sr. Director of Transfusion Innovation and Product Development within the Medical Office at the American Red Cross. Dr. Brown has over 15 years of experience utilizing her foundational clinical science experience for clinical innovation and translational research. Exposure to health inequalities and observations of tangible improvements to quality of life through medical advancements shaped her current research interests to better understand the capacity of blood therapies to alleviate human suffering in increasingly meaningful ways.



Catherine Gebhart, PhD, D(ACHI) is the Senior HLA Director at the American Red Cross, Northeast division. Dr. Gebhart has over 15 years of experience in clinical molecular diagnostics and transplantation. Dr. Gebhart has expertise in laboratory test development (LDT) for high complexity testing to support emerging clinical needs. She advocates for the development, improvement and streamlining of technology to provide patients of all genetic backgrounds with the best possible health care.



Matt Hukill, MBA, MLS(ASCP)^{CM} I was born in Ohio and started my career in blood banking at the Cleveland Clinic where I was fortunate enough to see many things and work under many seasoned people; something that most young techs never experience. Warm weather and a better quality of life to raise a family led me to the Red Cross in Durham in 2017, where I spent several years learning how to be a reference tech under some of the best people in the field. I took what I learned from my experiences and left the Red Cross to accept an opportunity to become an Immunohematology Reference Laboratory Manager at a regional competitor, but my heart was at the Red Cross, so after a year I came home to the Durham IRL. I am currently working as a reference technologist again and am excited to see what comes next for me here at the Red Cross.



Margaret A Keller, PhD, is the Executive of the Red Cross National Laboratories and the American Rare Donor Program. She is also the Editor-in-chief of *Immunohematology, Journal of Blood Group Serology and Molecular Genetics*. Dr. Keller has over 25 years of experience in molecular genetics and for the last decade has been involved in using molecular methods to identify rare and antigen negative red cell and platelet donors as well as to assess patient risk of alloimmunization associated with transfusion or pregnancy. Dr. Keller is interested in genetic variation in the RH locus and using RH allele information for selection of blood products for

Rh alloimmunized patients. Dr. Keller is adjunct associate professor at Thomas Jefferson University where she is involved in training of Transfusion Medicine fellows as well as students in Jefferson genetic counselor program.



Liz Marcus, BSc, PMP is the Director of Hospital Sales & Marketing and has been with the American Red Cross for 13 years. She earned her degree in Molecular Biology and Molecular Genetics at the University of Toronto. Her work experience was honed by work in several leading research laboratories. These include work in the United Kingdom (with Sir Bruce Ponder at Royal Marsden Hospital) and in Canada (with Dr. Lyanne Schlichter at Toronto Western Hospital) prior to transitioning to a Marketing and Product Management role with multiple biotechnology companies in the

United States. Ms. Marcus has authored several scientific publications, is a co-inventor of two patents and is a certified project manager.



Dr. Marla Troughton is a former Medical Director for the Alabama & Mississippi Region of American Red Cross who also served as Interim Divisional Chief Medical Officer for the Northeast and Southeast Caribbean Divisions. She currently is a Medical Director for Takeda BiLife. Dr. Troughton has presented numerous lectures and has had various teaching opportunities throughout her career. She holds an appointment as Clinical Assistant Professor in the Department of Laboratory Medicine at the University of Alabama. She has co-authored multiple book chapters and peer-reviewed papers, as well as abstracts and posters. Her areas of interest include quality and regulatory compliance.



James Westra, MD, joined the American Red Cross- Northern Ohio Region in 2009. He currently is Medical Director for the Ohio North and South Regions in the Mid-Atlantic Division of the American Red Cross Blood Services and CLIA Laboratory Director for the laboratories in Cleveland and Columbus, OH. He received his medical degree from Rush Medical College in Chicago, IL, completed a pathology residency at Naval Hospital San Diego in San Diego, CA, and a fellowship in Transfusion Medicine at the University of Chicago Medical Center. Dr. Westra is Board

Certified in Anatomic / Clinical Pathology and Blood Banking / Transfusion Medicine by the American Board of Pathology.