

## From the Editors, April 2021

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Welcome to Telegraft April 2021 Edition. The field of Cell and Gene Therapy has not only survived a full year of COVID-19 but the industry is booming, with new Companies forming, achieving significant investment and funding, as well as many mergers and acquisitions at all stages of the commercial life cycle. A few years ago, we could easily count the Cell Therapy Companies and big pharma was not amongst them. Now approximately half the cell and gene therapy developers are small players, but we have increasing expansion with almost all the major pharmaceutical companies now having at least one if not more products on the market or in late stage development often with RMAT or similar designation. Another really exciting factor is that we now have serious players emerging around the world, meaning the Cell & Gene Therapy is truly becoming Global.

We recently celebrated some of our own with the announcement of our 3 2021 ISCT Award winners. Their stories highlight the diversity of our membership, and are a reminder that we all play a part in the success of our field. Keep an eye out for their profiles in the upcoming issue of *Cytotherapy*, and the next issue of *Telegraft*:

- 2021 Career Achievement Award – Dr. Donald Kohn
- Inaugural Darwin J. Prockop Mentoring Award – Dr. Catherine Bollard
- Inaugural Le Prix Luc Sensebé Innovation Award – Mr. Keith Thompson

It is with some sadness that I reflect on the news that the PACT Update in this issue will be the second to last Update, as the program begins to wind down. I recall the excitement when the PACT (Production Assistance for Cellular Therapies) was launched 17 years ago with support from the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute (NIH). Unfortunately, the PACT Coordinating Center's contract and operations end on June 30, 2021. If you haven't already discovered the educational resources on the [PACT website](#), don't delay accessing the content, as the PACT website will also be removed at the end of the contract in June. Lani Ibenana at PACT has indicated they will provide a retrospective piece in June to give a bit of an overview of the key lessons learned through PACT, and I look forward to reading and reflecting on their experience.

This issue includes many regular features, and in the lead up to New Orleans Virtual, we share video profiles for each of the ESP Ambassadors, who will help connect the ISCT 2021 Annual Meeting to the community. Have you noticed the images and banners going out on Twitter and LinkedIn? Not just our ESP Ambassadors but speakers, session chairs and more sharing excitement about the upcoming annual meeting. It is disappointing to still not be able to travel but I am looking forward to the meeting and especially to the dedicated networking day.

While the Annual meeting is the highlight of the ISCT year for me, please catch up on the ISCT ANZ regional meeting and the recent ISCT webinars. The webinar on Patient Advocacy was a collaborative panel that discussed the adjustments and challenges that have arisen for patients and clinicians alike in the process of developing and executing clinical trials in the context of COVID-19. This is a great reminder that we should involve patient and consumer representatives at all stage of our product development.

Just this month The Medicine Maker announced it's 2021 Power List and standing alongside Nobel prize winners are several of our ISCT Leaders past and present: Catherine Bollard, MBChB MD (President 2016-2018), Massimo Dominici, MD (President 2014-2016), Miguel Forte (Chief Commercialization Officer 2016-2020), Bruce Levine PhD (President 2020-2022). Claudia Zylberberg PhD (Commercialization committee), and Queenie Jang, MBA Chief Executive Officer.

I feel incredibly privileged to have been part of the growth of Cell & Gene Therapy, to count these people not just as my colleagues but also as my friends. It is great to be a member of the ISCT family.

Stay safe everyone, until we can meet in person again.