

## On behalf of ASHI's Division of Membership Services

### Technologists' Affairs Committee

#### "WELCOME TO ASHI and HLA"

Your colleagues and friends on the ASHI Technologists' Affairs Committee offer this welcome letter to answer some questions you may have, and to share valuable information about ASHI membership, certification, continuing education and opportunities for involvement. We hope this proves to be beneficial to your career in histocompatibility and immunogenetics.

#### **What is HLA and why is it important to the field of Medicine?**

The science of histocompatibility and immunogenetics is concerned with genetic polymorphism in healthy subjects and patients; and the development, performance and interpretation of laboratory tests for organ transplantation and related medical/biological applications. The field includes the following general areas:

- Identification of human leukocyte antigens (HLA), their genes and other genetic systems commonly studied in connection with the HLA system
- Analysis of HLA genotype segregation data in families
- Production, procurement, and characterization of antibodies, immune cells and probes for proteins and genes of the major histocompatibility complex (MHC)
- Functional histocompatibility assays measuring lymphocyte activation and cell-mediated cytotoxicity
- Application of polymorphisms to questions of parentage, genetic relationship, and disease risk
- Principles of transplant immunology, self-recognition, and MHC restriction of immune responses
- Behavior of MHC genes in populations and their significance to anthropology and evolution
- Principles of laboratory administration, quality control, quality assurance and personnel management
- Regulations and policies governing laboratory testing, human organ transplantation, and organ sharing at the national, regional and local levels

#### **Introduction to HLA (from the ASHI Directors' Affairs Committee:**

<http://www.ashi-hla.org/images/uploads/HLABasics2014.pdf>

<http://www.ashi-hla.org/images/uploads/IntroductiontoHLA.pdf>

#### **Fields ASHI members are a part of:**

- Research Labs
- Histocompatibility (HLA) and Immunogenetics Labs
- Bone Marrow Transplantation
- Deceased Donor Organ Transplantation
- Living Donor and Kidney Paired Donation
- Transfusion Support (Platelet compatibility)
- Pathology

- HCT Engraftment Monitoring
- Molecular Diagnostics (Disease associations, Drug interactions, Vaccine production)
- Bioinformatics

**ASHI Volunteer Opportunities:**

Publications Committee	External Affairs Committee
Information Technology Committee	Quality Assurance & Standards Committee
Membership Committee	Proficiency Testing Program
Technologists Affairs Committee	Directors Training Review & Credentialing
Directors Affairs Committee	Accreditation Review Board
International Affairs Committee	Scientific Affairs Committee
Bylaws Committee	Education Committee

**ASHI Travel Award:**

The Travel Fund Award was created to help new ASHI members attend the Regional and Annual ASHI meetings. Half of the awards are given to non-doctoral members and half are given to doctoral level members. ASHI members who volunteer on committees or present an abstract at meetings get extra points toward selection. It's a once in a lifetime opportunity to see how far our work in the HLA field has gone and in what direction HLA is headed. Watch for travel award announcements before regional and annual ASHI meetings

**What is ASHI and what is the purpose of ASHI?**

ASHI: American Society for Histocompatibility and Immunogenetics

ASHI PURPOSE/VISION: The American Society for Histocompatibility and Immunogenetics is an international society of professionals dedicated to advancing the science, education and application of immunogenetics and transplant immunology.

**ASHI CORE VALUES:**

- |                  |                             |
|------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1. Education     | 6. Engagement               |
| 2. Leadership    | 7. Expertise                |
| 3. Quality       | 8. Patient Advocacy/Service |
| 4. Collaboration | 9. Responsibility           |
| 5. Advocacy      |                             |

**What are the benefits associated with ASHI membership?**

**Benefits of Membership – Website:** [www.ashi-hla.org/about/membership](http://www.ashi-hla.org/about/membership)

- All members receive an online subscription to the ASHI Quarterly, the President's Newsletter and access to the on-line Membership Directory. All members except International Associates receive discounted prices when purchasing ASHI publications.
- All members are eligible for CE credits from the *ASHI Quarterly* quiz free of charge.
- All members are eligible for discounted registration fees at ASHI's annual meeting and regional education

workshops.

- All members have free access to ASHI University (a web-based text and video curriculum providing comprehensive standardized information on topics relevant to the fields of histocompatibility and immunogenetics).
- Full, Technologist, Student/Fellow, Affiliate, Emeritus Members receive the additional benefit of an online subscription to ASHI's scientific journal, *Human Immunology*. A print subscription to the journal may be purchased for an additional fee.
- International Associate Members may purchase an online subscription to ASHI's scientific journal, *Human Immunology*, for an additional fee.
- Student/Fellow Members receive an additional discount for the annual meeting registration.

**What is ABHI? How is ABHI different from ASHI?** Website: [www.ashi-hla.org/u/abhi](http://www.ashi-hla.org/u/abhi)

**ABHI:** American Board of Histocompatibility and Immunogenetics

The ABHI Board is sponsored by the American Society for Histocompatibility and Immunogenetics (ASHI). The Board is legally and administratively separate from the Society in all matters pertaining to certification of individuals. The goals of ABHI are:

- To implement the educational and competency standards established by the Society for laboratory personnel by means of certification.
- To define and promote laboratory work in histocompatibility and immunogenetics as an occupation in the public sector.
- To examine individuals at the pre-doctoral and post-doctoral levels on a national scale and to issue certificates of competency to successful applicants in the name of the Board.
- To maintain a registry of certified individuals and to disseminate information through publications or other means.
- To promote continued professional growth and to document such activity.

**How Can I become ABHI certified in Histocompatibility?**

There are three levels of ABHI Certification: CHA, CHT, and CHS. Educational requirements are specific to each. Links to Applications Forms and information can be found on the website.

Website: [www.ashi-hla.org/u/abhi/examinations](http://www.ashi-hla.org/u/abhi/examinations)

**What are some resources to help me prepare for the ABHI Certification examination?**

Extensive List of References: <http://www.ashi-hla.org/u/abhi/examinations/preparation/study-materials/>

ABHI Candidate Handbook: <http://www.ashi-hla.org/images/uploads/ABHIhandbookMarch2014.pdf>

ABHI CHA/CHT/CHS Exam Matrices: <http://www.ashi-hla.org/u/abhi/examinations/matrices/>

ASHI Standards: <http://www.ashi-hla.org/lab-center/accreditation/forms/standards/>

Educational material can also be found at:

- [www.unos.org](http://www.unos.org)
- <http://optn.transplant.hrsa.gov/converge/members/committeesDetail.asp?ID=7>
- <https://bioinformatics.bethematchclinical.org/HLA-Resources/>

- <http://hla.alleles.org/nomenclature/index.html>
- <http://www.ebi.ac.uk/ipd/imgt/hla/intro.html>
- <http://www.histocompatibilityandimmunogenetics.com/>

We also recommend:

- Know serological equivalents, parent antigens and splits
- Be familiar with CREG groups
- Know DRB1-DQB1-DRB3/4/5 associations
- Understand HLA inheritance and pedigree analysis of family studies
- *DNA Methods for HLA Typing – Workbook*
- *Essential Immunology – Publication*

**Once ABHI certified, what are some resources to help me maintain my Continuing Education requirements?**

Check out ASHI University (ASHI-U). Website: <https://www.ashi-u.com/> Click on “Know more about ASHI-U”.

**ASHI-U OBJECTIVES:**

- Provide participants with comprehensive updates on a variety of topics related to the fields of immunogenetics, immunology, histocompatibility and transplantation, genomics, and pharmacogenetics, including new ways of using typing for HLA and immune system genes for matching and for understanding human population history.
- Provide participants with new approaches to getting more people transplanted.
- Provide participants with knowledge to be able to more critically assess various aspects of laboratory testing, including detection of clinically relevant antibodies, methods for HLA and non-HLA typing, crossmatching techniques, fragment based testing, analyzing test results and troubleshooting

**How can I reach other Histocompatibility Technologists when I have technical questions or want a “peer review”?**

The Technologist Forum on LinkedIn is available to non-doctoral ASHI members. It is a great place to get feedback from your technologist peers. [http://www.ashi-hla.org/u/tech\\_forum/](http://www.ashi-hla.org/u/tech_forum/)

**How can I find out about career opportunities?**

Find career opportunities or post new job openings at ASHI’s Career Center: <http://www.ashi-hla.org> Click on Career Center.

**How can I learn about current NEWS and activities in ASHI?**

Stay connected with news, happenings, and email blasts via “ASHI Insights” at <http://www.multibriefs.com/briefs/ashihla/>