

2026 Community Service, Outreach and Advocacy Award

This award recognizes contributions that advance professional awareness and representation through education, outreach, mentorship, leadership, or related efforts; and/or improve healthcare access, patient experience, socioeconomic outcomes, or research on health equity and disparities.

Ronald Balassanian, MD



Dr. Ronald Balassanian is Professor of Pathology at the **University of California, San Francisco (UCSF)**, where he serves as Residency Program Director, Medical Director of Cytology, and Director of the Fine Needle Aspiration (FNA) Biopsy Clinic. Throughout his career, he has combined excellence in patient care, education, advocacy, and global health initiatives to expand access to high-quality diagnostic services and strengthen pathology practice nationally and internationally. At UCSF, Dr. Balassanian has advanced patient-centered care through innovative

programs such as the “Ask Your Pathologist” initiative, which enables breast cancer patients to review and better understand their pathology findings directly with a pathologist. He is also deeply committed to mentorship, guiding pathology residents, medical students, and premedical trainees throughout their professional development.

A recognized leader in global pathology education and outreach, Dr. Balassanian has helped develop sustainable FNA and breast pathology training programs in Peru and Tanzania through collaborations with regional cancer centers and academic institutions. His international work has focused on building local diagnostic capacity, expanding access to cancer diagnostics, and fostering educational and research partnerships that promote health equity in resource-limited settings. He has also contributed to pathology education initiatives in Armenia, Botswana, Kenya, and through the ASCP Africa Calls program.

In addition to his clinical and educational achievements, Dr. Balassanian has been an advocate for diversity, equity, and inclusion within pathology. He contributed to the landmark *Diagnostic Cytopathology* special issue, *Education and Diversity in Cytopathology: Past, Present, and Future*, and has supported pathway programs designed to increase opportunities for students underrepresented in medicine. His longstanding leadership in LGBTQ+ mentorship and community engagement further reflects his dedication to creating a more inclusive profession.

Through his work in patient communication, global health, medical education, mentorship, and advocacy, Dr. Balassanian has made enduring contributions to cytopathology and to the advancement of equitable healthcare worldwide.

Prior recipients of the Community Service, Outreach and Advocacy Award

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