Further information about the content of the course will be provided by the end of 1998. The course is intended to provide a comprehensive review of genetics and should be particularly helpful for trainees planning to take the American Board of Medical Genetics and the American Board of Genetic Counseling examinations in 1999. We thank Arthur Beaudet of Baylor College of Medicine for his willingness to turn over this outstanding educational activity to the ACMG.

The Education/CME Committee chair has passed from Jessica Davis to Bruce Korf. New members on the committee are Mary Curtis and Cynthia Powell. Two new members will be added every year to succeed committee members who complete their four-year terms.

Joint Committee on Professional Practice and Clinical Guidelines

Michael M. Kaback, MD, Chair

The committee met on February 26, 1998, in Los Angeles at the Fifth Joint Clinical Genetics Conference. Completion of the cancer genetics guidelines draft and the lengthy review process were discussed. The committee carefully analyzed the latest draft of the congenital malformations guidelines; suggestions were considered and incorporated. Additional funds for dissemination and evaluation of this document have been secured through a grant from the CDC Centers of Excellence for Birth Defects Prevention. The committee would like to review the new compendium of guidelines produced by the American Academy of Pediatrics Genetics Committee. Other clinical issues needing guideline development were deliberated. Two possible topics are the assessment of the family with history of mental retardation and a work-up of the newborn with ambiguous genitalia.

The committee sponsored a workshop at the conference entitled "Clinical Practice Guidelines for Congenital Malformations." The workshop was moderated by Michael Kaback and included presentations by Keith Servis (New York State Department of Health), Karen Greendale, Cheryl Reid, and Frank Desposito. Karen Greendale presented "Cancer, Genetics and the Public's Health," a talk on the development of the cancer genetics guidelines at the Annual Council of Regional Networks for Genetic Services meeting in Decatur, GA.

Clinical Practice Committee

Lewis B. Holmes, MD, Chair

The Clinical Practice Committee of the ACMG focuses on issues of concern to practicing clinical geneticists. In discussions and position statements we have addressed Cystic Fibrosis (CF) screening, the addition of screening for Canavan's disease to Tay Sachs screening, and genetic screening in general. We have published our position statements about the lack of apparent benefit from treating children with Down syndrome with Piracetam and nutrition supplements. The Dysmorphology Subcommittee (Chris Cunniff, MD, Chair) has developed and published suggestions for the work-up of individuals with mental retardation. Currently, they are developing guidelines for the evaluation of the stillborn infant. The α–fetoprotein (AFP) and Related Analytes Subcommittee (Ira Salafsky, MD, Chair) has developed commentaries on folic acid supplementation and is now addressing the issue of genetic screening in the first trimester.

Laboratory Practice Committee

Michael S. Watson, PhD, Chair

The Laboratory Practice Committee has initiated several new projects. After the NIH Cystic Fibrosis Consensus Conference, it was immediately recognized that testing for CF mutations is relatively straightforward, but that the delivery system of screening parents for carrier status in primary care settings is not fully developed. A mechanism for providing the full spectrum of services with CF carrier screening tests was needed. This activity is being included under a new committee chaired by Robert Desnick, MD, PhD. This committee is also facilitating the transfer of new tests and technologies into clinical investigation and practice, ensuing development of guidelines for analytic components of tests, billing and reimbursement issues, regulatory agency interaction, etc.

Quality Assurance Subcommittee

Shivanand Patil, PhD and C. Sue Richards, PhD, Co-chairs

The Quality Assurance Subcommittee of the Laboratory Practice Committee has been responsible for the development and maintenance of the "Standards and Guidelines for Clinical Genetics Laboratories." First published in 1994, the manual is going into its second edition. This edition will address the limited number of concerns expressed by members and will add a new section on the interphase and metaphase fluorescence in situ hybridization (FISH) testing and several methods in molecular genetic testing. The College's Standards and Guidelines have been used by laboratories as part of their quality assurance programs and by regulatory bodies in the development of their requirements for genetic laboratories.

Committee on Economics of Genetic Services (COEGS)

David Flannery, MD, and Wayne Miller, MD, Co-chairs

The most significant news from the COEGS regards the final approval of our revised proposal for CPT codes for Cytogenetics, Molecular Genetics, and Biochemical Genetics tests. Effective January 1, 1999, these new codes will incorporate improved cytogenetics codes, FISH codes, an expansion of codes in molecular diagnostics which includes components of protein truncation tests, and DNA sequencing. After a long period of education and discussion with the CPT Editorial Panel including Michael Watson, Wayne Grody, and Piero Rinaldo, the revamped system was approved and

should be amenable to addition of new analytical codes as technologies evolve. The next stage of this activity has begun and involves the collection of cost analysis data from laboratories around the country. These data will be sent to Medicare (Health Care Financing Administration) and Medicaid Departments as well as to other payers so that they have up-to-date information on which to base reimbursement decisions.

David Flannery represented the ACMG at the AMA CPT Advisory Committee, which has begun work on proposals to develop CPT codes for Patient Education and Counseling, under the direction of, but not necessarily by a physician. The import of such codes for genetics was advocated to the working group and seemed to be appreciated by other specialties. This represents a potentially "great leap forward" for medical genetics, and feedback will be sought from ACMG members as language is developed and circulated. Debra Lochner Doyle has been working to educate the National Committee for Quality Assurance (NCQA) about the importance of medical genetics. The long-term goal is to encourage NCQA to incorporate key genetic services into the Health Plan Employer Data and Information Set (HEDIS) quality indicator sets used to assess quality of care of managed care plans. A final COEGS activity for the coming year will be a structured resource and time analysis of the work of providing genetic services. These data will be analyzed to determine whether we can make our case that clinical genetic services are unique and more complex than other types of commonly performed medical services and form the basis of new CPT proposals for clinical genetic services.

Test and Technology Transfer (TTT)

Michael S. Watson, PhD and Jonathan Zonana, MD, Co-chairs

The TTT Committee is a joint activity of the ACMG and ASHG. The committee has several working groups in various stages of completion of position statements. Positions papers that have already been released include analyses of Prader-Willi and Angelman syndromes testing, chaired by Suzanne Cassidy and Merlin Butler; ApoE4 and Alzheimer's disease chaired by Lindsay Farrer (the ApoE4 and Alzheimer's Disease Working Group chaired by Lindsay Farrer has published its meta-analysis of the relationship between ApoE4 and Alzheimer's disease in the *Journal of the American Medical Association*); and a paper entitled "Laboratory Guidelines for Huntington Disease Genetic Testing" from the Huntington Disease Working Group, chaired by Martha Nance and William Seltzer. A report on "Measurement and Use of Total Plasma Homocysteine," chaired by Stephen Goodman, is in press.

Several position papers are currently under development in working groups. "Interphase FISH Testing," chaired by Maimon Cohen and Michael Watson, will separate the technical aspects of FISH that are standardized and controllable from the clinical uses (which is where the questions about FISH testing arise). "First Trimester Screening for Down Syndrome," chaired by Linda Bradley and Ronald Wapner, is in final draft. A Working Group on Colon Cancer Genetic Testing, chaired by Patricia Murphy and Gloria Peterson, is also developing a position paper.

Newly established working groups include "Factor V Leiden Testing," chaired by Wayne Grody; "Preimplantation Genetics," chaired by Eugene Pregament; and "Tandem Mass Spectrometry in Newborn Screening," chaired by Stephen Goodman and Joel Charrow. Additional Working Groups on Subtelomeric Rearrangement Detection and Uniparental Disomy Testing are under development.

ACMG**Announcements**

1999 Annual Meeting

The Annual Clinical Genetics Meeting will be held March 19-21, 1999, in Miami, FL. The Call for Abstracts/Preliminary Program will be available in October 1998. If you are not on the mailing list of the March of Dimes or the American College of Medical Genetics but would like to receive information, contact the ACMG Administrative Office at 9650 Rockville Pike, Bethesda, MD 20814-3998. Phone: 301-571-1887, fax: 301-571-1895, or e-mail: mgross@faseb.org.

1999 Genetics Board Review Course

The ACMG's 1999 Genetics Board Review Course (formerly offered by Baylor College of Medicine) will take place April 23-25 in Schaumburg, IL. Gail Herman, David Ledbetter, and Bruce Korf are the organizers for this program, which will serve as a solid review in the basics of medical genetics, as well as a preparation for the 1999 American Board of Medical Genetics examinations in general genetics, genetic counseling, and laboratory and clinical aspects of genetics. The course is approved for CME credit. The preliminary program and registration forms will be mailed in January 1999 to ACMG members and persons certified by the ABMG and the ABGC. If you are not on these lists or have further questions, contact the Administrative Office at the address above.

CME

The American College of Medical Genetics has been surveyed by the Accreditation Council for Continuing Medical Education (ACCME) and awarded accreditation for two years as a sponsor of continuing medical education for physicians. ACCME accreditation seeks to assure both physicians and the public that continuing medical education activities sponsored by the American College of Medical Genetics meet the high standards of the Essentials & Standards for Accreditation as specified by the ACCME.