UPDATE

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NATIONAL BLOOD FOUNDATION

Harold Kaplan, MD, Chosen to Receive First Hemphill-Jordan Leadership Award

In December 2004, Blood Systems/United Blood Services of Phoenix, Ariz., and Lewis & Roca, an Arizona-based law firm, established the Hemphill-Jordan Leadership Award endowment to annually fund a $5,000 award that recognizes outstanding performance, commitment and leadership by an individual serving in a CEO, COO, quality, legal or financial capacity in a blood center or transfusion medicine facility. They chose the National Blood Foundation (NBF) to administer the endowment, which memorializes the contributions of two AABB co-founders and visionaries in the field of transfusion medicine—Bernice Hemphill and W. Quinn Jordan. At the AABB Annual Meeting and TXPO, held Oct. 15-18 in Seattle, Wash., Harold S. Kaplan, MD, will become the award's first recipient.

Dr. Kaplan, who currently serves as professor of Clinical Pathology at The College of Physicians and Surgeons of Columbia University and director of Transfusion Medicine, New York Presbyterian Hospital, Columbia University Medical Center in New York, N.Y., is being presented with the Hemphill-Jordan Leadership Award in recognition of his pioneering work in the development of the Medical Event Reporting System for Transfusion Medicine (MERS-TM), and for his continued research in establishing the usefulness of standardized medical event reporting for error prevention and management.

After receiving his undergraduate degree from Oberlin College in Ohio, Dr. Kaplan earned his medical degree from the Albert Einstein College of Medicine in Bronx, N.Y. He performed his post-graduate training in pathology and transfusion medicine at the Columbia Presbyterian Medical Center and at the National Institutes of Health. Dr. Kaplan is well known for his pioneering work in the development of MERS-TM, which was made possible through a grant from the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute.

MERS-TM is designed to help transfusion medicine professionals understand and prevent transfusion medicine errors, perform root cause analysis and classify transfusion medicine errors/events and their causes in a standardized and methodical manner. It is currently in use in hospitals in the United States, Canada and Ireland, and can be found at the MERS-TM Web site, www.mers-tm.net. The Web site provides training materials, links to articles on understanding and preventing errors in transfusion medicine, a tutorial on getting started, a database, a glossary of terms and information on how to build a culture in which employees are encouraged to report near-miss events. "It's important to have an environment where people aren't afraid to tell you about the mistakes they've made," noted Kaplan, who has recently been involved in expanding MERS-TM into a hospital-wide system, Medical Event Reporting System for Total Healthcare (MERS-TH), under a U18 demonstration grant, "Reporting Systems and Learning: Best Practices," from the Agency for Health Care Research and Quality.

In addition to his work on MERS-TM, Dr. Kaplan also co-developed and patented the Blood-Loc system, which prevents units of blood components from being transfused into incorrect patients. His research focuses on establishing the usefulness of standardized medical event reporting for error prevention and management. He has also written extensively for publications focusing on transfusion safety and quality management principles.

As part of the award, Dr. Kaplan will present the Hemphill-Jordan Lecture at the AABB Annual Meeting on Monday, Oct. 17, from 8:30 am to 10:00 am in rooms 611-612 of the Washington State Convention and Trade Center.