

# OFFICE OF THE CHIEF OF STAFF NEWSLETTER

## MEETING THE CHALLENGES

Dear colleagues,

Greetings to all the readers of this winter issue of the Office of the Chief of Staff Newsletter and sincere thanks to the extraordinary work each one of you does to our university, community, and the people of Lebanon and the Arab world. While there may be great challenges around us, there is no doubt that AUB and its exceptional Medical Center are going from strength to strength. Applications for undergraduate admissions have been going up by over eight percent; a remarkable group of 58 new faculty arrived at the beginning of academic year 2017-18; budgets for both AUB and AUBMC were met; we were able to give out more financial assistance to students and patients; we received a record-shattering \$100 million in new pledges last year and embarked on a transformative master plan for our campus and Medical Center. Of 198 full time professors at AUB who are eligible to apply for tenure, 102 submitted their applications by September 2017, which reflects a great commitment, enthusiasm, and effort to restore tenure after a 30-year hiatus.



Meanwhile, AUBMC received an excellent review and accreditation from the Joint Commission Accreditation (JCI), its fourth in a row. By delivering the highest quality of patient care, the Medical Center showed remarkable results and grew hospital volumes by more than five percent. Importantly with our tight budgetary parameters, we saw an increase in net patient care revenues of six percent. We are now tracking towards the implementation of Epic, which will deliver a state-of-the-art electronic health record (EHR) system, the first in Lebanon. Further integration of our outstanding new medical curriculum is under way, and we continue to rank at the top of all medical schools in the Arab world based on QS rankings. With the transformative AUBMC 2020 Vision being delivered on schedule we have launched AUB's broader vision on health, HEALTH 2025, aiming to align all the strategic and functional units engaged in health. The emerging Global Health Institute (GHI), the first of its kind in the global south, is an integral component of this vision, with an ambitious program to devise impactful solutions to the great public health challenges emanating from this region. We have a long way to go, and there will certainly be harder times ahead, but things are definitely looking up, and I want to thank each and every one of you not just for your individual contributions, but for the hard work that lies ahead.

**Dr. Fadlo Khuri**  
President, American University of Beirut

# THE JOURNEY CONTINUES

In the era of technological breakthroughs, digital innovation, and rapid network connectivity, information technology is revolutionizing the way medical care is being delivered. It is transforming the entire medical field.

I returned to AUB in 2008 after spending 23 years at Emory University Hospital in Atlanta, Georgia. Back then, no one predicted that the largest transportation company in the world would be created without owning a single vehicle, and that the world's most popular social media outlet would be possible without creating any content, and that the world's largest accommodation provider would emerge without owning any property. In the healthcare field, the possibilities are endless, and they include implantable health sensors for remote patient monitoring, the 3D printing revolution such as for customized implants and prosthetics, the nanotechnology for targeted drug delivery, and nano-robots to potentially make repairs at the cellular level. The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has just approved gene therapy to fix mutations in the inherited form of retinal dystrophy. Medical artificial intelligence is being integrated with computer techniques that can potentially outsmart healthcare providers in diagnosis and treatment. Many other advances are just around the corner.



When Executive Vice President (EVP) Dean Mohamed Sayegh launched the AUBMC 2020 Vision, AUBMC leadership committed itself to embracing cutting-edge technologies, improving operational efficiency, and delivering high quality care to the patients in Lebanon and the region. The much anticipated Halim and Aida Daniel Academic and Clinical Center (ACC) is a reflection of this commitment being a unique state-of-the-art outpatient landmark that encompasses a comprehensive approach to patient-centered care and the pursuit of excellence in healthcare and medical education.

At the core of the 2020 Vision is the transformation of healthcare by optimizing and standardizing the processes for medical care through the implementation of the AUBHealth project. The widespread adoption of electronic medical records in the USA due to its drastic impact on the delivery of care has motivated us at AUBMC to enter a new era in patient care through the acquisition of the world's most sophisticated Epic (EHR) system. The value of these systems is derived from their ability to act as a comprehensive "source of truth" for medical information giving clinicians access to immediate, reliable, and real-time patient data.

The electronic system eliminates variability and uncertainty through care pathways and protocols, enables data-driven performance improvement through decision support, and decreases serious medical errors by 55% through alerts, reminders, and advisories. There is no doubt that a well-designed and thoroughly implemented system can achieve remarkable quality, safety, and efficiency improvements. We are excited for the launch of a new phase of medical care delivery that will keep us on the best path.

Many major milestones have thus far been accomplished, but our path to success will continue to be filled with challenges. It is our ability to face those challenges and work towards our strategic goals that will help reshape our institution. Our priority is to deliver the highest level of ethics and integrity that have characterized the reputation of our institution for the past 150 years. And, I am confident about the capabilities of every member of the AUBMC family to push forward together on this path to excellence.

**Dr. Ziyad Ghazzal**  
Interim Medical Center Director and Chief Medical Officer (CMO)

# IN RECOGNITION OF HASSAN EL SOLH

An outstanding physician and a gifted administrator, Hassan worked diligently and with the highest integrity to realize a transformative vision engendered by EVP/Dean Mohamed Sayegh and cherished by the leadership and AUBMC family. For the duration of his tenure as Medical Center Director and CMO, Hassan embraced the mission and embodied the distinguished values which guide our vision and drive our endeavors. Guided by EVP/Dean Sayegh and working with a dedicated team, Hassan scored a brilliant chapter in humane service and healthcare management. He led and inspired visionary programs and dared impactful protocols, thereby, advancing clinical excellence and earning prestigious awards and accreditation.

His patients and colleagues will always miss Hassan's empathetic and comprehensive clinical skills and excellence. We applaud Hassan's unfettered social conscience and his unbound passion to serve his community and beyond. Actually, his restless urge to engage in human service underpins his unexpected step to move on to a new path in healthcare.

In recognition of the distinguished service and a legacy of achievement and honor, and with deep appreciation and profound gratitude, we say thank you Hassan.

**Dr. Samir Alam**  
Chief of Staff



# BONE MARROW TRANSPLANTATION AT AUBMC: A REGIONAL PROGRAM OF EXCELLENCE

Bone marrow transplantation (BMT) is a therapeutic modality for a wide array of benign and malignant blood disorders, in addition to some solid tumors. The number of performed transplants at AUBMC since the start of the program in 1998 has been increasing every year. Our program was the first in Lebanon to perform matched unrelated donor transplants as well as transplants from haplo-identical donors. The program attracts patients from Lebanon, the surrounding countries, the Arab Gulf, as well as north and west Africa. Since its launching at AUBMC to date, the program has performed around 870 allogeneic and autologous transplants for both adult and pediatric patients. The program has not only witnessed a growth in the number of patients, but in the number of professionals from all disciplines working on the care of transplant patients throughout the continuum of their disease, as well. The program actively participates in transplant research as a member of the European Blood and Marrow Transplantation (EBMT) group and the Eastern Mediterranean Blood and Marrow Transplantation (EMBMT) group.

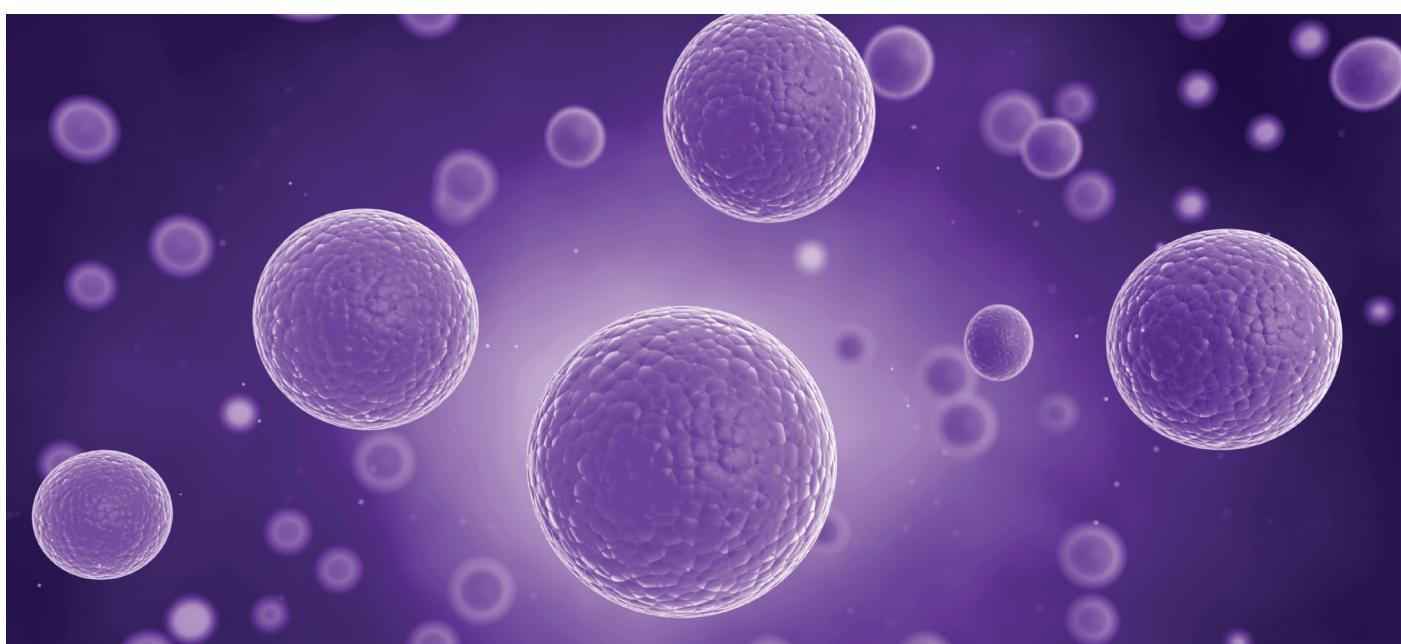
Towards the end of 2013, the program aspired for accreditation from JACIE, Joint Accreditation Committee of ISCT (International Society of Cellular Therapy) and EBMT, which is the most prestigious accreditation that ensures high quality of care for transplant patients and their donors. It sets professional standards of practice to increase consistency in healthcare delivery. In turn, it improves patient care outcomes and enhances the satisfaction of both patients and care providers. The team was dedicated to achieving such a milestone that was seen as an exciting, yet challenging, journey where multidisciplinary efforts were all invested on a path led by leaders who were and still are committed to maintaining such an achievement. The team worked around the clock ensuring that all steps for accreditation were on the right path.

Initially, the practice and processes were reviewed, in addition to all existing policies and guidelines. The structure and processes were all compared to the standards by conducting a gap analysis, and a long list of needs was drafted in order to start bridging the gap. Documents related not only to policies and procedures or to clinical guidelines were needed, but to the quality management plan, staff qualification and education, physical environment, facility management, and safety. The site visit took place in January 2016 over a period of two days, and accreditation was announced on August 25, 2016, for a period of four years. This makes AUBMC's BMT Program the only accredited in Lebanon and one of the very few accredited programs outside Europe and North America.

**Dr. Ali Bazarbachi**

Associate Dean for Basic Research

Director, Bone Marrow Transplantation Program



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