

Alcor News Bulletin

Number 16: September 1st 2003

After the Media Blitz

As reported in the previous Alcor News, our former Director of Clinical Services, Larry Johnson, provided confidential information to a journalist at Sports Illustrated, which published a seven-page feature about Alcor around August 13th. (The cover date of the issue was August 18th.) We have moved quickly in response to the negative nationwide publicity which followed.

Former Alcor president Carlos Mondragon flew to Scottsdale to help manage the media blitz while our current President and CEO, Jerry Lemler, was in a local hospital receiving chemotherapy. Carlos has been active in cryonics for more than twenty years. He originally signed up with the Cryonics Institute of Michigan in 1978 but became an Alcor member in 1982. He joined the Alcor board of directors as Treasurer in April 1987 and took over as President in December of that year. He is often credited with playing a very significant role helping to defend Alcor against legal allegations from the coroner's office in Riverside, California during 1988. At the end of that case all charges were dismissed, the legality of cryonics was affirmed by the court, and California became the only state where cryonics is listed as an official option on death certificates.

Soon after arriving in Scottsdale on August 11th 2003, Carlos gave a press conference and we issued a press release to counter the ways in which Alcor had been mischaracterized. Excerpts were circulated by Associated Press.

Since we had lost our Director of Clinical Services, contingency plans were made in the event that any of our members experienced a health emergency. "I reviewed the transport protocol, went over our equipment, and talked to all the people involved, so that I could deal with an emergency," Carlos comments.

On Saturday August 23rd Alcor served a law suit against Larry Johnson and his wife alleging breach of contract, breach of fiduciary duty, and conversion of property, meaning that Alcor believes he took company property with the intention of converting it to his own use. (Johnson's wife is named in the suit because married couples own property jointly under Arizona law.) Local police subsequently have returned some items to Alcor which they obtained from Johnson, but other items are still missing, including a laptop computer.

Johnson must respond to the law suit by September 20th. If he fails to do so, Alcor may win a default judgment. If he does respond, the discovery process will begin, and after it is complete a court date will be set. This can take a substantial period of time.

Separately from Alcor's civil suit, another investigation has been initiated. Since this has not resulted in formal charges yet, we can't provide any information about it at this time.

The flow of calls from journalists to Alcor has now ceased. A Good Morning America segment is pending and is expected to include footage shot at the facility, but the segment has already been delayed by a week and may never be aired.

Alcor has found a replacement for Larry Johnson who has substantial experience in cryonics standby/transport work and in the operating room, but this person will not be available until the end of September. Carlos Mondragon will return home to Oregon on Sunday September 7th but will continue to be available for phone consultations during the remainder of that month. We are extremely indebted to him for the large amount of time that he has donated to Alcor during this stressful period, and for his decisiveness and fairness during his temporary management role.

Alcor's other emergency team members remain on-call as usual.

Cryonics Institute Faces Regulatory Action

According to a news item that appeared on August 26th in about a dozen newspapers around the nation, the Cryonics Institute of Michigan has been prohibited from performing procedures at its facility until it conforms with regulations intended for mortuaries and cemeteries. We have no additional information at this time, but naturally we hope that the management at CI is successful in resolving this serious situation. It is in the best interests of all cryonics organizations for human cryopreservation to be a legitimate legal procedure in every county of every state. Also there is an obvious need to avoid any legal precedent for applying mortuary or cemetery regulations to cryonics.

In the past, Alcor has successfully and correctly argued that since we are a research institution receiving anatomical donations under the Uniform Anatomical Gift Act, we should not be subject to mortuary regulations that enforce procedures such as embalming. Similarly, a sperm bank or a laboratory storing tissue samples would be unable to do its work if it were classified as a mortuary.

Cemetery regulations are equally inappropriate. To take just one example, we cannot maintain patients in hermetically sealed containers (as specified by Arizona mortuary law) since venting is necessary to allow liquid nitrogen vapor to escape.

If any readers of Alcor News have academic credentials or other status which might be respected in a court of law, CI asks them please to contact David Ettinger at the Cryonics Institute in case they may be willing to make a statement defending or explaining cryonics. David Ettinger's email address is

Some Alcor members have expressed concern that we may be

vulnerable to the same kind of legislative initiative that has been aimed at CI. Fortunately former president Steve Bridge and former vice president David Pizer obtained preapproval from local zoning officials before Alcor moved to Scottsdale from its previous location in California. Alcor also received formal preapproval from the local Health Department and other agencies.

Alcor has undergone several regulatory inspections during the past month, including a visit from the Fire Department and the Department of Environmental Quality. The only concern expressed by DEQ was that some cement left over from a floor-tiling procedure was found in the parking lot behind the facility. We are waiting for instructions on the correct way to dispose of this waste. The fire department made eight requests for minor changes, all of which have been completed.

Alcor has now requested an inspection from the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA). By initiating this assessment Alcor avoids the possibility of being fined for previous regulatory noncompliance, but naturally if any violations are found we will have to rectify them within a period that will be specified by the agency.

Facility manager Cindy Felix has had valuable experience dealing with OSHA at a previous place of employment, and is going through every section of Alcor's facility prior to the inspection. In a related activity, Director of Suspension Readiness Mathew Sullivan has been working for two weeks to update a book of handling procedures for every chemical that is used at Alcor.

We expected to be scrutinized after the Sports Illustrated article appeared. So far, Alcor has not suffered any significant consequences.

Facility Expansion Update

As reported in previous issues of Alcor News, we are midway through an ambitious facility expansion plan. Earlier this year a committee comprised of former Alcor president Steve Bridge, director Steve Van Sickle, and then-C.O.O. Charles Platt established a floor plan which was accepted by board members and Alcor staff after protracted negotiations. A new conference room has been created, new office cubicles were built in the lobby, and plans were established for a new operating room after consultation with one of our surgeons, Jose Kanshepolksy, and our surgical technician, Jeff Kelling.

At the request of Carlos Mondragon, the facility expansion committee has been disbanded, having completed its most important work. Cindy Felix, our highly capable facility manager, has been given the primary responsibility of implementing the remaining tasks that were itemized by the committee. An engineer has visited Alcor and has advised that an upper storage level above our new operating room could be prohibitively expensive if it conforms with local building codes. Discussion is also in progress regarding the best way to enable Dewar-to-Dewar patient transfers, which require sufficient headroom to lift a wholebody pod from one Dewar

and lower it into another.

At each stage in the renovations, Alcor will be in compliance with local codes and regulations.

From Alcor's Board of Directors

The Resignation of Alcor's President and CEO

On August 10th 2003 Jerry B. Lemler MD tendered to the Alcor Board of Directors his intention to resign as the foundation's CEO at the expiration of his current yearly agreement, on December 31st of this year. The Board has accepted Dr. Lemler's resignation. It is the expectation and intention of all parties that Dr. Lemler be retained as Alcor's Medical Director and chief spokesperson.

As many of you know, Dr. Lemler continues to undergo intensive and extended chemotherapy and other treatments for a recently diagnosed widespread lymphoma. During this transition period he will be actively supporting and participating in the company's search for new executive management, and he will assist in the transition.

Alcor's Directors wish to thank Dr. Lemler for his contributions and they look forward to his continued association with them and his future work in the furtherance of our mission. Dr. Lemler wishes to thank the Board of Directors and Alcor's staff for their support of his efforts, and to reaffirm his commitment to Alcor.

From Michael Riskin

An Appreciation of Jerry Lemler

The Alcor Board of Directors has accepted the resignation of Jerry B. Lemler MD as its CEO and President for reasons related to his personal health and welfare. Dr. Lemler was diagnosed with widespread lymphoma earlier this year and has completed approximately half of an eight-month intensive chemotherapy program. The results to date of this treatment are quite promising. It is anticipated that he will experience a 100% cure with no further complications or symptoms. Starting on January 1st 2004 he will be assuming new duties as Alcor's medical director and chief spokesperson.

During the rest of this year Jerry will be participating in a search for his replacement while transferring his management responsibilities on a timely and effective basis. In addition he plans to fulfill his commitment to deliver a speech on September 22nd during the Tenth Congress of the International Association of Biomedical Gerontology at Queens College in Cambridge, England. This PowerPoint presentation, entitled "Medical Time Travel as a Bridge to Negligible Senescence," has been cowritten by a prominent team representing cryobiology and research medicine with assistance from

science writer Charles Platt. The speech will be published subsequently in the Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences, marking the first time that the scientific basis of cryonics will be presented and published in mainstream medical venues.

Jerry's tenure with Alcor will be remembered as one of "inclusiveness". It has been a time when diverse institutions and people were drawn together, working as a team to significantly raise the overall readiness, quality, and efficiency of Alcor's cryotransport services from rescue to cooldown. Further, it is widely acknowledged that he developed into one of the most effective spokespersons for Alcor and cryonics generally.

On behalf of the Alcor Board of Directors, I wish to thank Jerry for those efforts he has already made on behalf of the Foundation...and we look forward to more of the same as he assumes his new responsibilities in the coming year.

Michael Riskin, PhD, CPA Chairman of The Board Alcor Life Extension Foundation

Finding a New President and CEO

Although Jerry Lemler's resignation does not take effect until the end of the year, we have begun the process of looking for a successor. Some Alcor members who have been recommended as possible candidates have been invited to send resumes. Alcor also invites resumes from anyone else who has a serious interest in the position of President/CEO. The organization may also use an executive placement agency, but has not determined whether this is appropriate. We have three months in which to find and hire a successor, and another month in which an orderly transition can occur.

Annual Elections at September Board Meeting

Alcor's next board meeting will be on Saturday September 6th at the Scottsdale facility, commencing at 10 AM local time. The annual election of Alcor directors will occur in this meeting, which is open to the public.

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