

Summary: "Friends of Africa-USCAP initiative" - Progress so far

The "Friends of Africa-USCAP initiative" is a voluntary group initiated by Dr Fred Silva [Executive Vice President, United States and Canadian Academy of Pathologists (USCAP) a division of the International Academy of Pathology (IAP)] and a number of other pathologists who came together under the auspices of the USCAP to try to understand some of the unique challenges of the African pathologist/s and to provide some help as may be needed for our colleagues in sub-Saharan Africa.

The "Friends of Africa-USCAP initiative" group had its inaugural meeting in San Antonio, TX in February 2005 . A number of issues were discussed. In summary, it was agreed that efforts to support the pathologists on the continent would need to be divided into phases which for convenience are categorized as follows:

Phase 1 - To provide access to educational materials in the form of hard copies of journals, e-Journals and USCAP journal / website access etc.

Phase II - To assist in the provision of programs of continuing medical education in the form of (a) pathology updates, conferences, seminars and annual pathology courses (b) short weeklong or weekend training seminars for technologists, as well as (c) collaborative projects within Africa and outside Africa.

Phase III – To develop a coordinated "Equipment for Africa " campaign (EFA.)

A number of institutions have indicated the availability of serviceable equipment which can be donated to needing institutions.

Achievements on Phase I goals:

(1) During the year 2005, this group was able to generate funds to pay for individual subscription to the *Modern Pathology* journal for 44 pathologists in 15 sub-Saharan countries. A total of 55 institutions in sub-Saharan Africa now receive a subscription to the UNCAP journal *Modern Pathology*,

(2) A total of 65 institutions now receive the College of American Pathology (CAP) journal - *Archives of Pathology and Laboratory Medicine*; Courtesy of the Editor, Phil Cagle, M.D. and publisher, CAP in 2006.

(3) A grant of \$1,800 for the mailing of the Archives for one year was recently awarded by the CAP.

(4) Generous free subscriptions of 65 sub-Saharan pathologists / institutions has recently been received for the following journals

(i) Human Pathology (55 institutions) – Courtesy of the Editor Ricardo Floyd M.D., Ph.D. and Elsevier publishers

(ii) American Journal of Clinical Pathology (65 institutions) – Courtesy American Society for Clinical Pathology

(iii) American Journal of Surgical Pathology (65 institutions) - Courtesy LWW- publishers

(iv) Journal of Neuropathology and Experimental Neuropathology to selected institutions (30 institutions) - Courtesy LWW- publishers

(5) Access to USCAP website and the knowledge hub.

(6) The Anglophone West African Division of the IAP is now up and running and formally inducted into the IAP at the IAP congress in Montreal, Canada in 2006.

(7) The East African Division of the IAP is in its formative stages and will be inaugurated after IAP council approval in October 2008.

(8) The USCAP provides the following:

(i) scholarship in the form of waivers of fees for courses and registration fees for a number of individuals from Africa who attend the annual USCAP conference, and

(ii) the USCAP long and short courses for 2005 to 2008 and the cytopathology course in DVD or CD formats have been made available free of charge to pathologists in Africa.

Achievements on Phase II goals:

There are a number of pathologists in the USA who have indicated their willingness to donate their time and efforts free of charge to participate in conferences, teaching seminars and courses after due consultation with the hosting country or regional pathologists. Such seminars are arranged in collaboration with the regional division of the IAP or with individual institutions / organizations. The topics range from histopathology to cytology, other aspects of clinical laboratory medicine and molecular pathology as may be deemed appropriate by the hosting IAP division or African institution.

(i) A weeklong cytopathology workshop was held in collaboration with the West African Division of IAP in August, 2006 with greater than 75 pathologists and trainees from Anglophone West African countries in attendance.

(ii) A second weeklong conference on Surgical Oncologic Pathology was held in August, 2007 with similar overwhelming attendance by pathologists and trainees from the Anglophone West African countries. Courses at these conferences were presented by volunteer academic pathologists from the USCAP and a number of American Universities / Institutions. We express our gratitude to the following volunteer faculty who have participated in these programs:

2006 Cytopathology and Renal pathology course – partly supported by a \$5,000 educational / conference grant from the Healthy Life For All Foundation to the West African Division of the IAP.

2007 Surgical Oncologic Pathology Conference – partly supported by a \$5,000 educational / conference grant from the IAP –Education committee to the West African Division of the IAP.

(iii) The "Friends of Africa-USCAP initiative" and the Anglophone West African Division of the IAP (AWADIAP) have agreed to hold annual conferences/courses on various aspects of pathology. The third annual conference was held in August 2008. The next conference is planned for August 2009

(iv) The East African Division of the IAP was inaugurated in October 2008. We have participated in their inaugural meeting and a pathology safar programme covering Tanzania, Kenya and Uganda in April 2009. We hope to continue to arrange similar regional educational conferences with them.

(v) The USCAP council has thrown a challenge to the Friends of Africa -USCAP initiative to raise marching funds for a grant of \$50,000 to support the cost of transportation and accommodation of African pathologists and trainees to the International congress of the IAP in Capetown, SA in 2012. We are working hard to raise these marching funds.

Phase III is in its early stages and obviously requires significant funding and organization to determine the needs of various institutions and coordinate the available equipment with institutional needs as well as raise funds for shipping.

I hope the information provided is useful in helping you to understand the objectives and goals of the "Friends of Africa-USCAP initiative" and to excite you enough to want to participate in this initiative. You can always contribute time and / or money to each of these projects. Please let us know if you need additional information.