

# Bringing New Therapies — and Accurate Information — to the Patient



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## THE RESEARCH COMMUNITY IN TRANSFUSION MEDICINE AND CELL- ULAR THERAPIES

is continually canvassing the literature and scientific meetings for new

developments that ideally will lead to treatments for patients in the months and years ahead. But, as anyone who has ever conducted medical research knows, moving a therapy from the laboratory bench to the bedside is a long and meticulous process — one that requires continual testing and assurances that the treatments are both safe and effective for human use.

This issue of AABB News aims to explore the process of bringing therapies closer to the patient. One article, beginning on page 10, delves into translational research — or research that bridges the gap between laboratory discovery and bedside treatments. In particular, this feature looks at the important functions of the Production Assistance for Cellular Therapies, or PACT — a program created by the National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute to support the development of novel cell therapies through assistance to investigators. The article also looks at the role that regulators and industry play in advancing cell therapy research.

How do patients find medical information and keep abreast new therapies? The answer may seem obvious: They go online. According to the Pew Internet & American Life Project, 80 percent of Americans who search the Internet use it to investigate health conditions. An article beginning on page 16 examines the pros and cons of this growing trend in the patient population. While it is important that individuals understand the treatments and procedures they undergo (or decline to undergo), experts are concerned that too much information can bewilder people lacking a medical background. Plus, untrustworthy sites could lead patients to consider expensive, unproven and even risky therapies. This article explains how medical providers can help patients navigate e-health information in a productive and effective way.

As electronic technologies continue to grow, it is critical that we stay connected to our patients and committed to making sure they understand their conditions and the available treatment options. While we must listen to the patient and respect his or her needs, we have a responsibility to provide accurate health information — and not leave that critical role solely to the Internet. *BB*

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