# April Advocacy Recap

May 10, 2022

**Alec Bose:**

Hello, and welcome to the CAP Advocacy Recap, a monthly podcast dedicated to catching you up on the top news for pathologists. I'm Alec Bose from the CAP's Advocacy Communication Team, here with your April recap. This month we'll recognize National Minority Health Month, look at the request for additional COVID funding, learn about new efforts in pandemic preparedness, and review highlights from this year's Pathologist Leadership Summit with Dr. Vaishali Pansare.

But we begin with our first story. April was National Minority Health Month, and the CAP has called on Congress to pass legislation addressing the social determinants of health in the United States. "Access to service like preventative care, cancer screenings and treatment for chronic illness are essential for communities of color, rural communities, and other underserved populations. Unfortunately, various social determinants contribute to people not getting the recommended healthcare services they need," CAP President, Dr. Emily Vogue said in a statement. The CAP has supported legislation to better understand these social determinants and figure out how they drive health disparities. For example, the CAP supports the Social Determinants Accelerator Act to improve healthcare data collection between federal agencies and establish a federal council to develop plans addressing determinants plaguing beneficiaries and the Medicaid program. The ACT will also provide needed grants and assistance to state, tribal, and local governments to deploy strategies addressing determinants in their own communities.

The CAP also joined several federal agencies and communities across the country by raising awareness for the importance of vaccines and booster shots as vital tools against the COVID-19 pandemic and reducing hesitancy. We will continue to engage on these issues to advocate for policies that result in a more equitable healthcare system.

We move on to COVID policy. The CAP and other members of the Cancer Leadership Council urged congressional leaders to approve additional funding and resources for the Nation's COVID-19 response. A deal to move forward with $10 billion in additional COVID funding had initially been struck earlier in April, where the money would have come from unspent funds from the American Rescue Plan. Although the deal fell through, it could still move forward. In a letter to Congress, the council stated the pandemic is not over for many cancer patients, including those who are immunocompromised because of their disease or treatment. "More federal funds are key to protecting access for the immune compromised for whom the pandemic may never be over." The CAP remains engaged to protect as many people from COVID-19 as possible and will continue to advocate for funding that ensures the school.

In related news, the White House announced in April the creation of a new Center for Forecasting and Outbreak Analytics under the CDC. The new center was the CAP supports will provide forecasting for infectious diseases. The CAP had urged the government to centralize resources to counter the current pandemic and prepare us for future ones, especially those elements concerning diagnostic testing. The center aims to improve outbreak and public health threat response by using infectious disease modeling and analytics to enable timely, effective decision-making by leaders at the federal, state, and local levels. We will keep CAP members updated with the work the center is doing in this vital space. We round out the recap with the 2022 Pathologist Leadership Summit. The hybrid meeting took place in the first weekend in May, and includes a gathering with the CAP House of Delegates, advocacy and communication training, and concludes with the CAP Hill Day, where attendees get the opportunity to advocate by consulting directly with the office of their congressional representatives. To hear more about their personal experience from the summit, we spoke with Dr. Vaishali Pansare delegation chair for the Michigan House of Delegates, and one of the panelists during the summit discussing how to get the most out of your state pathology society. Well, Dr. Pansare thank you so much for joining us today. We really do appreciate it.

**Dr. Vaishali Pansare:**

Thank you very much for having me.

**Alec Bose:**

So to start us off, can you talk about the beginning of the Pathologist Leadership Summit? What were your first impressions during the initial days of the event?

**Dr. Vaishali Pansare:**

So when I was invited actually to be a panelist for the Leadership Summit, I was a little bit nervous because I was going to talk about advocacy. But as I went into the meeting and I saw all the folks at CAP meeting after a very long time, it was just a great feeling to meet everyone, network with everyone. And that just made me feel very comfortable. I was very impressed with the program that we had, that House of Delegates as well as the leadership talks that we had.

**Alec Bose:**

Can you discuss your experience of the panel that you were on and what was the topic and why was it important for pathologists attending to hear it?

**Dr. Vaishali Pansare:**

So our panel discussion related to state level advocacy, not federal level advocacy. We were four of us Dr. Kadoff from New York, Dr. Densis from University of Washington, Dr. Gupta from Missouri, and I was representing Michigan. So each one of us have some role in our state pathology society and how we advocate for us at the state level, and our experiences are different. So when we initially got together just brainstorming ideas, we realized that each one of us were doing something different, and it was very nice to hear what the other panelists were doing. And then it started flowing very coherently that we were going towards the same goal, but yet doing so things differently.

**Alec Bose:**

What was one or some of your favorite parts of the summit, and what would you like to see at next year's summit?

**Dr. Vaishali Pansare:**

So I really enjoyed connecting with everyone on site for a meeting and networking with everyone. And if I may even say so, we had reception almost every evening where we came together and talked about different things, which we haven't seen in a while. So that was the first thing.

Secondly, some of the talks were really great. I enjoyed Dan Harris, the ABC journalist, talk about being 10% happier. And it's just a small 10% change that all of us are entitled to do and want to achieve in life. So that was a great talk. I also enjoyed the fact that he is the son of Nancy Harris, who happens to be a very famous pathologist. So that connection was great.

I enjoyed the pathology workforce discussions because, as we all know, pathologists staffing shortages are incredible at this time and in the next 10 years we are probably going to see more shortages unless we do something about it. So I really enjoyed that discussion, talking to everyone and seeing how all the labs are handling their staffing shortages.

**Alec Bose:**

Great. And that is a very important issue, the issue of workforce and making sure that pathologists have a strong workforce. What would you tell those who are interested in possibly attending the Pathologist Leadership Summit next year?

**Dr. Vaishali Pansare:**

So those who are interested in attending the session next year, I would say please come and join. The more we are networking with each other, it's great for our practice. You will also get to hear some great talks about leadership, about pathology practices across the country, including academic practices and private practices, the reimbursement issues that we are all facing, what is CAP doing about it and what you can do to help yourself and the pathology community. And it's a great meeting.

**Alec Bose:**

Dr. Pansare, thank you so much for joining us. We really appreciate your time today. That's all for this edition of the CAP Advocacy Recap. Thank you so much for listening. Be sure to read our weekly advocacy newsletter and follow us on Twitter at CAPDCadvocacy. Once again for CAP advocacy, I'm Alec Bose, and we'll see you next month.