

Heart of Clinical Care Award

John Cannatella

I would like to nominate Dr. Jeffrey Canatella for the heart of clinical care award for our department awards.

Dr. Cannatella exemplifies exceptional dedication to patient care through his outstanding work in hematopathology, flow cytometry, and laboratory medicine at UNMC. As a board-certified pathologist, former Medical Director of the Flow Laboratory, and current Flow Cytometry Fellowship Director, he consistently demonstrates diagnostic excellence, professionalism, and a commitment to ensuring accurate and timely diagnoses that directly impact patient outcomes.

Beyond individual case interpretation, Dr. Cannatella has contributed to improving clinical systems and laboratory operations through leadership roles, educational initiatives, and implementation-focused committee service, including participation in the EPIC Beaker Scoping Committee.

His dedication to high-quality diagnostic care, consultation, and continuous improvement of pathology services has made a meaningful impact on patients, trainees, clinicians, and the broader healthcare community.

David Wagner

Nebraska Medicine (NM) is about serious medicine and extraordinary patient care. Pathology is the cornerstone of modern medicine. In pathology, the area where the skills of the pathologist directly impact patient care is anatomic pathology and more specifically surgical pathology, cytopathology and hematopathology. The acquisition of such skills requires a significant amount of experience in working up difficult cases over many years. I know of only one pathologist in our department who has such experience and consistently demonstrates the application of such skills and this is Dr. Wagner.

Dr. Wagner is only one of two pathologists in the department who consistently demonstrates a very high TAT for cases (>98% for a 3 day TAT; for comparison its <90% for most pathologists). This helps our surgeons counsel patients before they are discharged following surgery as opposed to having to do this at a later date.

The most important aspect in a pathology laboratory is quality management. Dr. Wagner is the director of quality for anatomic pathology (AP- an area where the pathologist's expertise plays directly into patient care). In this role, he doesn't just supervise others but leads by example. He is only one of two pathologists in the department who is on clinical service every single day. Every single day as he signs out cases, he demonstrates to others what quality is and how its delivered. He doesn't shun difficult cases and is always available for advice as required.

As director for quality for AP, he has instituted many improvements such as how quality assessment data is classified and how data from tumor boards and multidisciplinary conferences can be integrated to lessen the burden on some services in collecting such data. He regularly provides real data at the AP quarterly meetings and this has been most helpful and informative to all. It has been a significant improvement in how such meetings were conducted in the past before he took over as the director for quality.

Accurately diagnosing cases also directly helps our tissue bank in correctly archiving tissue material as needed for research. If a tumor has been incorrectly diagnosed/classified by the pathologist, it will get archived by the bank as such and all research data linked to the tumor tissue would be incorrect and misleading. Dr. Wagner's accurate diagnoses have thus indirectly helped power research here at NM. This fact is often overlooked and it's really pathologists like Dr. Wagner who accurately diagnose cases who should be acknowledged in resulting publications.

He teaches clinicians in other departments like ENT, by going over the histopathology of cases sent to him each month. This helps them in better tailoring care to patients based on their learning of pathology as demonstrated by Dr. Wagner at these conferences.

He is also only one of two pathologists in the department who contribute to more than 100 multidisciplinary conferences every year (for comparison most others do well less than 80).

The only pathologist that I can rely on if I need anything early in the morning is Dr. Wagner who is always here by 7 am. He is always willing to help out and is in fact one of the best members on our team.

To summarize, I cannot think of anyone who comes even close to Dr. Wagner in terms of his dedication, experience, commitment to quality and professionalism in the delivery of clinical care. He is truly most deserving of this recognition.