

## Recognizing Additional Advocates of the UNIVANTS of Healthcare Excellence Program

The UNIVANTS of Healthcare Excellence awards are a collaborative and global initiative made possible through the partnership of eight leading healthcare organizations/societies including the International Federation of Clinical Chemistry (IFCC), AACC, EHMA (European Health Management Association), Modern Healthcare, Health Information and Management Systems Society (HIMSS), National Association of Healthcare Quality (NAHQ) and the Institute of Health Economics (IHE) and Abbott Laboratories. The prestigious award program inspires teamwork across healthcare disciplines for measurable benefits and key performance indicators for patients, payors, clinicians and entire health systems. As the mission resonates with health champions across the globe, strong advocates emerge every year to support awareness and reinforce opportunities for healthcare transformation. Last year, the IFCC eNews featured 10 early program advocates across various disciplines and geographical areas. This article however spotlights ten additional program advocates; all of whom, as before, are influential leaders in their respective fields with proven success in advancing healthcare. On behalf of the UNIVANTS of Healthcare Excellence program, we thank each of these individuals for their partnership, support and advocacy. Together, we are inspiring patient-centric, measurably better healthcare.



**Alexandra Yates**

*Director of Scientific Affairs  
The Association for Clinical  
Biochemistry and Laboratory  
Medicine (ACB)*

Alexandra is a Clinical Scientist in the Clinical Biochemistry department at the North Midlands and Cheshire Pathology Service, UK, where her interests include analytical interferences, renal medicine and quality improvement. Wider interests also include equality and diversity within healthcare organisations where Alexandra is passionate about enacting meaningful change and equity for all. Alexandra was appointed as Director of Scientific Affairs for the Association for Clinical Biochemistry and Laboratory medicine in May 2019, after 5 years on the scientific committee, and a previous role, as a national member on the ACB council. As chair of the Scientific and Clinical Practice Committee, she leads the committee in fulfilling their vision of serving all ACB members across pan-pathology disciplines, enabling and promoting translational research and innovation, and providing scientific and clinical expertise to ACB's strategic partners in order to benefit the wider healthcare community.

“The UNIVANTS programme and awards are strongly aligned with the ACB's ongoing strategy of promoting innovation in the healthcare arena. In previous years, several ACB members have benefitted greatly from the programme having been recipients of awards. The ACB looks forward to having opportunity to celebrate the successes of all winners, share best practices, and inspire even more members to apply for recognition through the UNIVANTS of Healthcare Excellence programme.”



**Carrie Donovan,  
MSAS, CPHQ**

*Safety & Quality Services  
Supervisor at Monument Health,  
Spearfish, South Dakota,  
United States*

Carrie is dedicated to the advancement of process improvement in healthcare. As a long-time board member at the National Association for Healthcare Quality (NAHQ), her passion to advance the profession of healthcare quality is well aligned for sustainable process improvements across communities. With direct expertise in risk management, performance improvement, infection control, patient safety, worker safety and emergency preparedness, Carrie helps to advance NAHQ's vision to realize the promise of healthcare improvement through innovative practices in quality and patient safety. Her interactions with the UNIVANTS of Healthcare Excellence awards date back to the inception, with valued contributions as a leader and advocate for healthcare excellence.

“It is rewarding to recognize transformational best practices who have made a measurable difference in healthcare. I am honored to advocate for such a meaningful program and see great promise in the value of integrated clinical care through teamwork and laboratory medicine. I am continually impressed with the UNIVANTS cases each year and the program as a whole.”



**Ellie Dow, LRCP,  
MRCS, PhD, FRCPath**

Consultant in  
Biochemical Medicine  
Diagnostics Laboratories,  
NHS Tayside  
Ninewells Hospital and  
Medical School  
Dundee, Scotland

Dr. Dow and her innovative clinical care team received top program honors in 2019 with the UNIVANTS of Healthcare Excellence Awards for conceptualizing and implementing a novel and cost-effective way to increase early diagnosis of liver disease. Their “intelligent liver function test”, or ‘iLFT’ quickly became standard of care across NHS Tayside, with work already initiated to roll out this best practice more widely across Scotland. Dr. Dow is a Consultant in Biochemical Medicine in Scotland and a leader in laboratory IT who champions integration of e-health into clinical care for healthcare excellence. Dr. Dow’s advocacy and passion for improving health outcomes is evident with highly impactful global presentations on iLFT and well as recent publications in the Journal of Applied Laboratory Medicine and conversation within eNews, as well as a guest editor this February for a special issue on measurably better healthcare for the e-journal of the IFCC (eJIFCC).

“UNIVANTS enshrines the way we now work: laboratorians and clinicians working in co-production for the benefit of our patients. All our projects improving patient pathways have this evidenced way of working at their core. Sharing best practice and enthusing others, that they too can work in this way, have been highlights of being involved with UNIVANTS. Global health systems have never been more challenged: UNIVANTS demonstrates what may be achieved by leadership in collaborative working for the benefit of patients everywhere.”



**David G. Grenache,  
PhD, D(ABCC)**

Chief Scientific Officer and  
Medical Director  
TriCore Reference Laboratories  
in Albuquerque, New Mexico

Dr. Grenache is world renown for leading transformational change in healthcare. Among many accolades, he received honors of distinction in the inaugural 2019 UNIVANTS of Healthcare Excellence awards for his laboratory’s efforts to improve prenatal care in New Mexico. As the president of AACC he championed the association’s strategic pillar to develop a quantitative evidence base to demonstrate the value of laboratory medicine for the organization and the field. He is a corresponding member on IFCC’s Committee for the Value Proposition for Laboratory Medicine and was a member of the National Quality Forum’s Improving Diagnostic Accuracy Committee. He previously held the position of AACC secretary from 2014-2016, chaired the organizing committee for the 2018 AACC Annual Scientific Meeting & Clinical Lab Expo and helped create the framework for AACC’s Society for Young Clinical Laboratorians while also serving as its first chair.

“I have had the pleasure of interacting with the UNIVANTS program on many levels. First, as a recipient of this prestigious award in 2019, and thereafter, as a strategic partner to the program through AACC. I encourage all laboratory professionals to engage collaboratively with their clinical colleagues to mobilize insights from laboratory medicine that will deliver patient-centric care.”



**Professor Dražen,  
Huić, MD, PhD**

Department Head of  
Nuclear Medicine and  
Radiation Protection  
University Hospital Centre  
Zagreb, School of Medicine  
Zagreb, Croatia

Prof.dr.sc. Dražen Huić, is an active and recognized leader in the field of nuclear medicine in Croatia as the Head of the Department of Nuclear Medicine and Radiation Protection at University Hospital Centre Zagreb (leading reference center in the country). His passion and leadership in this field is evident via his long-standing position as President of the Croatian Society of Nuclear Medicine, authorship across approximately 50 peer-reviewed publications, leadership at international congresses, engagement with multiple International Atomic Energy Safety Agency (IAEA) sponsored projects, and mentorship to young scientists.

“The UNIVANTS of Healthcare Excellence Award inspires healthcare teams to collaborate across disciplines, including laboratory medicine, in pursuit of not just Healthcare Excellence but better patient care. This sentiment is shared across the Croatian Society of Nuclear Medicine as collaboration with laboratory medicine is integral for developing novel treatment pathways, enhancing patient care and achieving improved outcomes for patients, payors, clinicians and health systems.”



**Professor Goran Krstačić, MD, PhD, FESC, FEHRA**

*Professor of Cardiology, Faculty for Dental Medicine and Health, School of Medicine, J. J. Strossmayer University of Osijek  
Co-founder, Croatian Heart House Foundation Croatia*

Professor Goran Krstačić has been an innovative leader cardiology for over 30 years with a legacy of outstanding leadership with the European Society of Cardiology, Working Group on e-Cardiology, member of the board of European Hear Rhythm Association and EP-EUROPACE and head of a specialized Institute for cardiovascular prevention and rehabilitation in Zagreb. He has authored over 150 publications in international journals with topic areas of focus including e-Cardiology, Digital health, m-Health and e-Health, preventive cardiology and cardiac rehabilitation. As co-founder of Croatian Heart House Foundation, he created a nationwide platform to assist in the treatment of patients with cardiovascular diseases, promote cardiovascular health prevention and the advancement of cardiology, while informing and educating citizens about their active participation for prevention and early detection.

“Integrated people-centered health services is about putting people and communities (not diseases) at the center of health systems, and empowering people to take charge of their own health, rather than being passive recipients of services. That mission aligns nicely with the UNIVANTS of Healthcare Excellence program in that transformational change requires unity across stakeholders, partnerships with clinicians and patients, as well as avant-garde thinking.”



**Craig Ivany, MBA, CHE**

*Chief Provincial Diagnostics Officer for the Provincial Health Services Authority, British Columbia, Canada*

Craig Ivany is a leading executive and laboratory services strategist with over 35 years of experience influencing healthcare. His depth of practice includes a legacy of leadership across Canada, including serving as Executive Director of Canadian Blood Services’ operations portfolio, CEO of the Eastern Ontario Regional Laboratory Association, CEO of Alberta Public Labs and is a current and past board member of several not-for-profit organizations in Canadian healthcare. In his current role as the Chief Provincial Diagnostics Officer for the Provincial Health Services Authority (PSHA) in British Columbia, Canada, Craig is leading the implementation of a new province-wide laboratory medicine service delivery model in collaboration with stakeholders across British Columbia. Craig is also a certified health executive, a long-time member of the Canadian College of Health Leaders and was appointed Adjunct Professor, Department of Pathology and Laboratory Medicine, Faculty of Medicine, University of British Columbia in 2021. Most recently, Craig was interviewed in Modern Healthcare (link to article) for his leadership in laboratory medicine and advocacy for the UNIVANTS of Healthcare Excellence Program.

“UNIVANTS recognizes the significant impact that the laboratory can have on clinical programs that solve the biggest challenges we face in delivering better healthcare. It draws upon the significance of our work. It doesn’t just focus on the innovations within the lab, but rather the broader impact they have on health outcomes.”



**Alexandre Lourenço**

*President, Portuguese Association of Hospital Administrators (APAH)*

Alexandre Lourenço is a hospital administrator at Coimbra Hospital and University Center, having performed various public duties within the Portuguese Ministry of Health. He coordinates the Postgraduate Program in Management of Health Institutions at ISEG – Lisbon School of Economics and Management. He is a consultant at the World Health Organization (WHO) for financing, health systems strengthening and healthcare delivery. He is also the President of the Portuguese Association of Hospital Administrators, the largest representation of professionals with administrative and management functions in the area of health within Portugal, and is board member of the European Association of Hospital Managers and Treasurer of the European Health Management Association.

“The UNIVANTS award is the perfect initiative to supports health systems and organizations in generating attention and momentum around the value-based paradigm; a worldwide community of practices among those that are pursuing transformations and reconfigurations in health services delivery to enhance outcomes, efficiency, quality. The rigour of the UNIVANTS methodological approach as well as the quality of the case histories makes it highly effective in providing actionable food-for-thought. The award is not just a celebration of achievements, but also a great learning opportunity for health managers and clinical leaders.”



**Katherina Psarra, PhD**

*Biochemist, Department of Immunology – Histocompatibility Evangelismos Hospital Athens, Greece*

Dr. Katherina Psarra has been active in the field of laboratory medicine for almost 40 years. She was instrumental in initiating and developing further the flow cytometry laboratory of Evangelismos Hospital, in Athens, Greece and in applying such methods in almost all clinical applications encountered in routine clinical settings, such as in immunology, hematology, oncology, gynecology, infections and neurology. She was a founding member of the Hellenic Society of Cytometry with leadership positions as treasurer and President. She has also held extended leadership positions with Greek Society of Clinical Chemistry/Clinical Biochemistry, European Society for Clinical Cell Analysis (ESCCA) and the International Federation of Clinical Chemistry and Laboratory Medicine (IFCC). In her current leadership role as editor in chief of the IFCC eNews, she has overseen the publishing of nearly one hundred articles about UNIVANTS and healthcare excellence, strengthening the education and amplification of best practice sharing across the globe.

“I am a strong advocate for the UNIVANTS of Healthcare Excellence program, and very much agree with the program’s mission and vision for driving transformational health outcomes through integrated clinical care teams and laboratory medicine.”



**Professor Tahir Pillay, MBCHB, PhD, FRCPath, FCPATH**

*Professor of Chemical Pathology and Head of Pathology University of Pretoria/National Health Laboratory Service and Steve Biko Academic Hospital*

Professor Tahir Pillay has a legacy of leadership within laboratory medicine including recent roles as Presidency of the South African Association for Clinical Biochemistry (SAACB) and Chair of the Communications and Publications Division (CPD) for the International Federation of Clinical Chemistry and Laboratory Medicine (IFCC). He is a Fellow of the Royal College of Pathologists and the College of Pathologists, South Africa, and has been the recipient of numerous honors, including the Juvenile Diabetes International Fellowship, the American Foundation of Clinical Research outstanding postdoctoral award, the Welcome Trust Senior Clinical Fellowship, and the Professors Prize from the Association for Clinical Biochemistry. Prof Pillay’s research and extensive publications span the area of the molecular cell biology of insulin signaling and insulin resistance, molecular modelling of ligand-receptor complexes and development of new diagnostic probes for point-of-care testing using recombinant technology. He is pioneering the application of nanobodies for diagnostic testing and his team received the first prize in the 2020 GAP Innovation awards run by the Technology Innovation Agency and Emory University Goizueta Business School for development of a low cost rapid antigen test for SARS-CoV2. He was recently interviewed in Modern Healthcare ([link to article](#)) for his thought leadership in laboratory medicine and advocacy for the UNIVANTS of Healthcare Excellence Program.

“Recognition can galvanize teams, elevating great work and meaningful outcomes to the rest of the world. The UNIVANTS of Healthcare Excellence awards rewards and elevates teams while also encouraging further innovation and professional development, potentially even creating more investment in their important work.”