

UNIFY FOR SOMETHING GREATER. HEALTHCARE EXCELLENCE AWAITS.



Driving innovation for measurably better care

Given its significant role in the collection and analysis of data, the laboratory is uniquely positioned to lead innovation within health systems. We spoke to John Frels, vice president, research and development, immunoassay and clinical chemistry, at Abbott Core Laboratory Diagnostics, who discussed the UNIVANTS of Healthcare Excellence™ award program and offered best practices for healthcare innovation.

As a leader of innovation at Abbott, what advice do you have for healthcare leaders seeking to develop a culture of innovation within their organizations?

JF: I think it comes down to knowing who your customers are and focusing on them relentlessly. It's critical that you understand your customers' needs and how they're currently being served. Build innovation plans around needs that aren't yet being met. If you do that repeatedly and well enough, your organization will be successful. That's how I think about our portfolio here and the products we put forward, and that's how our lab customers think about their customers—physicians, hospitals and patients, which all have unique needs. The more you focus on those needs, the more you will inherently come up with solutions that solve their unmet needs.

The UNIVANTS of Healthcare Excellence award encourages healthcare teams around the world to transform clinical care and achieve measurably better outcomes. What types of innovation stand out in terms of best practices and representative methodologies?

JF: There are many—I've had the privilege of reviewing some of the awards and great work over the last couple years. What's striking to me about UNIVANTS winners is they are adding new tests or algorithms not just because the laboratory wants to add another option to its menu, but because they are looking to solve a specific problem within a care pathway. They're acting on data that says this diagnostic tool is needed, and they have sought insight into not just making the test available but determining what it can do for their organization. UNIVANTS winners have determined clear performance measures and evaluated whether their innovations can deliver what their customer—whether internal or external—truly needs. They're managing clinical care pathways through the lens of how advances in the laboratory can affect patient outcomes, turnaround time or other metrics.



John Frels
Vice President, Research and Development,
Immunoassay and Clinical Chemistry
Abbott Core Laboratory Diagnostics

As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, patients are more aware than ever of the laboratory's critical role in care innovation. How can we build upon this momentum?

JF: It's motivating for a lot of us in this industry, because it reminds us that laboratory medicine has always played a critical role in healthcare. We've seen from the pandemic how critically important a test result is—it has really shone a highly visible light on this profession, and there is enormous momentum to build on. Now that the general public awareness has increased, there's an opportunity to unify for something greater. This shift in awareness allows us to raise our voice to improve the overall healthcare system. Laboratory medicine professionals should use examples born out of the last year to translate into gains in innovation that could be great examples for the rest of the healthcare system.

Applications for the UNIVANTS of Healthcare Excellence award are now open. Why do you believe leaders should apply for this prestigious award?

JF: Innovation is happening every day in the laboratory, where professionals are deeply committed to their work. When care teams seek to innovate within their institutions, that commitment translates into improved processes and best practices. Shining a light on those great examples of innovation helps to further motivate and empower others to do the same. Everyone wants to make improvements and do something for the benefit of the healthcare system, and that's why lab professionals are doing what they're doing—they understand the importance of their work. UNIVANTS is a great platform for that, as it is specifically focused on best practices coming out of the core laboratory that have a measurable benefit for patient care. I would encourage everyone to look at their team's best practices and use UNIVANTS as a platform to put those best practices out on display.

Applications for the 2021 awards are now open. Apply now at UnivantsHCE.com.



IN PARTNERSHIP WITH

