Working Together for LIFE
Mission Statement

The American Association of Tissue Banks is the premier standard-setting body promoting the safety and use of donated human tissue.

Vision Statement

The AATB supports the advancement of tissue bank professionals and tissue banking technologies so no one suffers from the lack of donated human tissue.
Attendees reconnect at the 2017 AATB Annual Meeting in Orlando, Florida.
Letter from Leadership

On behalf of the AATB Board of Governors, we are pleased to present this inaugural Annual Report for the American Association of Tissue Banks. 2017 was a meaningful and productive year; this report will review some of our past accomplishments and will also highlight some of our future goals and initiatives. In addition to highlighting the AATB’s accomplishments, we have included several stories of the inspiring individuals—tissue donors, donor families, tissue recipients, and tissue banking professionals—who are the impetus behind everything we do.

One of our major accomplishments in 2017 was the Board approval and ongoing execution of our 2017–2019 Strategic Plan. The three key components of the Strategic Plan are (1) improve professional development opportunities, (2) expand communications to increase engagement, and (3) strengthen the AATB’s advocacy efforts.

This focused effort resulted in a record-breaking year in many areas. We increased and improved our educational and professional development opportunities, and as a result, AATB webinar attendance hit an all-time high with more than 2,000 attendees. Continuing a trend, 90 percent of the sessions at the AATB Annual Meeting represented original content. Efforts to increase engagement resulted in the largest number of voters in the AATB Board elections and included the greatest number of write-in candidates for the two member-at-large Board seats.

In terms of communications, we launched our electronic newsletter, The AATB Tissue Times, and initiated a more focused effort to thoroughly share our advocacy work. This resulted in a new AATB webpage that details the regulatory and public policy initiatives accomplished by the AATB Tissue Policy Group (TPG), LLC.

Another major accomplishment was the development and execution of the National Tissue Recovery through Utilization Survey (NTRUS). The AATB, in partnership with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, conducted a survey of U.S. tissue banks to document all aspects of tissue banking—from donor screening and recovery through processing and distribution—for the years 2012 and 2015. The last time a similar survey was conducted was in 2007.

The results of the NTRUS survey will give the AATB accurate data to articulate the size, scope, and overall positive clinical impact of the tissue banking profession. The ability to accurately document the donors we honor and the patients’ lives we touch will have many positive outcomes. From a clinical, legislative, regulatory, and international perspective, our ability to educate numerous stakeholders about the U.S. tissue banking profession will go a long way toward confirming tissue banking’s significant contributions to the overall health care continuum.

But the AATB just did the asking; the credit really goes to the tissue banking professionals who took the time to participate and supply this crucial information. While some of the high points are included in this
Annual Report, the final NTRUS report should be available in Q2 2018.

Finally, 2017 was the year we introduced an interactive online edition of the 14th Edition of the *Standards for Tissue Banking*. We are also continuing the development of a new software program that will allow the entire accreditation process to be performed electronically. This program will be rolled out to our accredited institutions in the second half of 2018.

The pages that follow are reminders of what the AATB community accomplished in 2017 with respect to professional development, communications, advocacy, safety and quality, and collaboration. We look forward to the advancements we will continue to make together, in 2018 and beyond.

We would be remiss if we didn’t acknowledge the tremendous work of the AATB staff and volunteers. Your dedication and commitment to the donors and their families we honor and the recipients we serve is a constant reminder of the important work of all tissue banking professionals.

Louis Barnes III, CTBS
Chair, AATB Board of Governors

Frank S. Wilton
President & Chief Executive Officer, AATB

“We look forward to the advancements we will continue to make together, in 2018 and beyond.”
Annual Meeting participant asks a question during an educational session.
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Working Together for Life

The AATB is a 501(c)(3) professional, nonprofit, scientific, and educational organization, founded in 1976 by doctors and scientists who had started the nation’s first tissue bank in 1949. They saw the need for a national organization to develop standards, promote ethics, and increase tissue donations. Today, the AATB is one of the only national tissue banking organizations in the United States, with a membership that includes:

- **More than 120 accredited tissue banks**
- **More than 2,100 individual members**
- **Approximately 2,500 Certified Tissue Banking Specialists**

The AATB is the premier standard-setting body promoting the safety and use of donated human tissue. We also support the advancement of tissue banking professionals and technologies so no one will lack access to the donated tissue they need. Working together as a tissue banking community, we’ve helped grow and improve the availability, screening, recovery, processing, storage, distribution, and transplantation of tissue that enhances and saves lives.

Clinicians in the U.S. request more than **3.2 million** tissue grafts to save and improve lives every year.

More than **90%** of the human tissue distributed for these transplants comes from AATB-accredited tissue banks.

Anna Greene McDonald, M.D., speaks on birth tissue suitability and application at the 2017 AATB Annual Meeting.
Our Values

Respect for donors and donor families

Ethical behavior

Safety through quality systems and standards

Professional development

Education

Community collaboration

Technological advancement through science

(From left) AATB Chairman-Elect Diana Buck, George W. Hyatt Award recipient Melissa Greenwald, M.D., of the Health Resources and Service Administration, and AATB Chairman Louis Barnes III
The AATB Annual Meeting is designed to leave members enlightened, inspired, refreshed, and connected with colleagues from all over the world, and it is continuously evolving to meet the needs of its members and the tissue banking community at large. The 2017 Annual Meeting in Orlando, Florida, featured:

- Ninety percent new content, including new sessions on toxicology, sperm and embryo donation, donation for research, and donor family services
- A new learning track focused on donor family services
- A first-time offering of education credits for certified surgical technologists and professionals in sterile processing and resource management

The Certified Tissue Banking Specialist Examination was administered at the AATB Annual Meeting in Orlando, and in three other countries.

Top: Kristina Ruiz-Healy, recipient of the Outstanding Public Education Award
Bottom: Angel Pendleton, a winner of the Outstanding Scientific Abstract by a CTBS Award, and Miguel Chalmers at the 2017 AATB Annual Meeting
Communications

The AATB has a duty to its members to communicate what the association is doing for them and why, and to give them unfettered opportunities to get involved in the issues that matter to them. To fully represent the interests of members, support the wider human tissue donation community, honor donors, and support tissue recipients, the AATB must ensure that the public and policymakers understand the importance and positive impact of the tissue banking community.

Improving this outreach is one of three goals in the AATB’s three-year strategic plan for 2017–2019. Here’s how we got started on this plan in 2017:

- Launched a newsletter for members, called The AATB Tissue Times, to keep members better informed and encourage their engagement and involvement.
- Created an AATB Tissue Policy Group (TPG), LLC page on the AATB website to update members on activities.
- Created the organization’s first annual report.
- Revised our mission and vision statements and AATB values to more clearly communicate our core beliefs and benefits to members and the public.
- Partnered with the federal government to conduct a survey of U.S. tissue banks that shows the size, scope, and positive clinical impact of the tissue banking profession.
- Surveyed members about their communications preferences.
- Developed a strategic communications plan.
Advocacy

The AATB and the AATB Tissue Policy Group (TPG), LLC, advocate for research and regulations that support the safety, quality, availability, and uses of donated human tissue, on behalf of our members and the millions of people who benefit from these donations.

As part of our advocacy work in 2017, the AATB:

- Called on the Science and Technical Advisory Committee (STAC) to help prioritize research projects based on professional needs and emerging regulatory and legislative requirements.
- Increased the visibility and role of the AATB TPG and its coordination with STAC and the AATB’s board.
- Engaged with the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) on numerous issues, including the application of unique device identifiers to human cells, tissues, and cellular and tissue-based product (HCT/P) devices. The AATB is urging the FDA to clarify the regulation of HCT/Ps to foster further innovation and improved patient care.
- Responded to the Florida Agency for Health Care Administration’s push to revise the regulatory requirements for tissue products.
- Formed an ad hoc group to address international issues that are important to tissue banks.
- Sent AATB President and CEO Frank Wilton to Brussels to deliver a presentation on the European Commission’s evaluation of blood, tissue, and cells legislation, including its coherence and consistency with equivalent legislation internationally.
Donor Family Gives — and Receives

For Shelley and Todd Persinger, even in the midst of the devastating loss of their 17-year-old son, Chris, in a car accident in Wisconsin, tissue donation provided a small measure of comfort. “We received a call from the American Tissue Services Foundation,” Shelley explained. “Chris was a registered donor, but he was only 17, and parent permission was needed to donate his tissue. So we honored his wishes.”

Within the next four years, Chris’ donation helped 63 people in eight states and on two continents. The 64th and final donation would carry even greater meaning: His younger sister Caitlyn needed surgery to repair the knee she badly injured playing soccer right before her senior year in high school, and the family learned that the one allograft left from Chris’ donation was the exact tissue Caitlyn needed. The surgeon successfully transplanted it.

Caitlyn soon returned to the field and went on to play in college—a tribute to her brother, who shared her passion for soccer and pushed her to excel. The family hopes the story serves as a reminder that the tissue banking community can change lives, often at critical moments.

“Chris continues to live on in the 64 recipients he helped, including Caitlyn,” Shelley said. “His donation really made a difference.”

B. Caitlyn Persinger received a tissue graft from her brother, Chris, four years after his passing.
National Tissue Recovery through Utilization Survey

The AATB, in partnership with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, conducted a survey of U.S. tissue banks to document all aspects of tissue banking—from donor screening and recovery through processing and distribution—for 2012 and 2015. The results of this survey can now be compared to similar data collected in 2007 to identify changes and trends in tissue banking over the last decade. The National Tissue Recovery through Utilization Survey (NTRUS) had a 100 percent completion rate among our accredited U.S. banks, as well as participation from several non-accredited institutions. This means that the data presented below are a robust representation of the current state of tissue banking in the U.S. The following charts display some of the initial, big-picture results of NTRUS. A full report of the data should be available in Q2 2018.

Over the past 10 years, tissue banking has experienced overall growth in both the number of donors and the number of recovered grafts. The total number of recovered/authorized tissue donors (both living and deceased) rapidly increased from 30,380 (2007) to 39,488 (2012) to 58,339 (2015). The number of grafts distributed also steadily increased, from 2,496,010 (2007) to 2,688,699 (2012) to 3,294,066 (2015).

The majority of this growth has been due to an increase in the donation and transplantation of birth tissue. This gestational tissue, often referred to as afterbirth, includes placenta, Wharton’s jelly, amniotic fluid, chorionic membrane, amniotic membrane, placental/chorionic disc, umbilical veins, and umbilical cord tissue, and it is used as a wound covering or barrier. From 2007 to 2015, the number of grafts from living donors increased from 926 (2007) to 193,615 (2012) to 430,662 (2015). It is exciting to see the evolution and expansion of the tissue banking community, and the AATB is looking forward to using the insights these data provide to change and grow in a way that better aligns our programs with the current tissue banking landscape.

Prior to conducting NTRUS, we had no means to accurately articulate the size, scope, and positive clinical impact of the tissue banking profession. Documenting the donors we honor and the patients’ lives we touch will help educate the public—including legislators and regulators—about the tissue banking profession and its important contributions to health care.

Once again, we would like to thank everyone who participated in the survey. We appreciate the time and effort that went into gathering and reporting this valuable information. From a clinical, legislative, regulatory, and international perspective, our ability to educate numerous stakeholders about the U.S. tissue banking profession will go a long way toward confirming tissue banking’s significant contributions within the overall health care continuum.
From 2007 to 2015, the total number of authorized tissue donors (both living and deceased) **more than doubled**.

From 2007 to 2015, the number of recovered deceased donors **increased by 31 percent**.

The total number of recovered/acquired living and deceased donors **increased by 92 percent** from 2007 to 2015.
The number of acquired living donors skyrocketed from 2007 to 2015 due to the demand for birth tissue grafts.

This gestational tissue, often referred to as afterbirth, includes placenta, Wharton’s jelly, amniotic fluid, chorionic membrane, amniotic membrane, placental/chorionic disc, umbilical veins, and umbilical cord tissue.

The total number of grafts distributed from living and deceased donors increased by 32 percent from 2012 to 2015.
Musculoskeletal grafts continue to be in the highest demand, making up over **71 percent** of the total grafts distributed in 2015 (living and deceased).

The number of grafts distributed in 2015 increased in five out of six categories. Tissue from living donors saw the sharpest increase (**122 percent**).
Safety and Quality

At the AATB, we know that behind every tissue recipient there is a story of hope—a heart valve that repairs a child’s damaged heart, a skin graft that heals a burn patient’s skin, ligaments and tendons used to help restore a veteran’s mobility. Every one of these patients deserves tissue of the highest possible quality that meets strict safety standards.

That’s why we accredit tissue banks, certify individuals in tissue banking, and publish and consistently update the most comprehensive and detailed tissue banking standards in the world. Here’s how we continued these efforts in 2017:

- Certified 226 tissue banking professionals who passed the 2017 Certified Tissue Bank Specialist Examination, demonstrating that they are up to date on tissue recovery and processing, decontamination techniques, quality control, and more. Approximately 2,500 individuals now hold the certification.
- Launched an interactive, online version of the Standards for Tissue Banking to provide instant, searchable access on PCs, Macs, tablets, and mobile devices.
- Invested in an electronic system for accreditation, scheduled for launch in 2018, to streamline the application, inspection, and corrective and protective action (CAPA) processes.
- Met with tissue recovery partners to get a better understanding of their unique needs and how the AATB can help address them, especially regarding the AATB’s accreditation inspection process, educational opportunities, and tissue banking standards.

The most recent data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reported the incidence of an infection caused by a human tissue allograft as 0.0004%.¹

¹ Report from Workshop on Preventing Organ and Tissue Allografts-Transmitted Infection: Priorities for Public Health Intervention, June 2-3, 2005
A Burn Survivor’s Second Life

After the house fire in Woodbridge, Virginia, that left 50-year-old Imran Zaman with mostly third-degree burns over 90 percent of his body, he underwent 56 surgeries, spent two-and-a-half months in a coma, nearly died three times, and regained consciousness without the ability to talk or do much else. “I was basically reborn, just like an infant,” said Imran, now 54.

Imran recovered, thanks to doctors, rehab specialists, his own will and hard work, and skin grafts primarily from donated tissue. Now he honors the donors by dedicating his life to advocating for organ and tissue donation in the U.S. and overseas.

“I feel like I have a lot to give to society now that I have what I call my second life. I go to churches, mosques, and other places, and I talk about how important donation is,” Imran said.

“I use myself as an example by talking about the situation I was in and what I am today. It’s possible because I got somebody else’s tissue. From within my heart, I thank whoever they were,” he added. “I also speak about how it’s possible to rise up from the dead. I want more donations so more people like me can get a new life.”
Collaboration

Volunteerism and member engagement are cornerstones of the AATB. We encourage collaboration within and outside of the organization because it expands our knowledge, keeps us apace with new developments and issues, identifies needs for advocacy and research, and helps members of the tissue banking community support and learn from each other.

In 2017, this collaboration continued on AATB councils, committees, and working groups. Some 2017 accomplishments include:

- **The Quality Council** completed and released two guidance documents. One addresses the qualification of packaging and validation of shipping/transport procedures, and the other addresses training and competency.

- **The Recovery and Donor Suitability Council** developed the physical assessment appendix for the 14th Edition of the AATB *Standards for Tissue Banking*.

- **The Communications Committee** collaborated on talking points throughout the year and produced a brochure for physicians to give to patients who are tissue recipients.

- **The Donor Family Service Ad Hoc Committee** hosted one AATB webinar and two in-person sessions at the AATB Annual Meeting.

- **The Education Committee** developed training and guidance documents and facilitated the development of the 2018 Topic of the Month Webinar Series.

- **The Membership Committee** developed a membership procedures document and developed and presented a member engagement webinar.

- **The NADO Ad Hoc Committee** published the second edition of *Standards for Non-Transplant Anatomical Donation* on Nov. 1, 2017, with an implementation date of May 1, 2018.

- **The Program Committee** developed educational content and recruited speakers for the AATB Annual Meeting and Quality and Donor Suitability Workshop.

The AATB also continued its collaboration with other organizations on issues of mutual interest. For example, we worked closely with members of the National Association of Medical Examiners, exhibited at the NAME annual meeting, and co-sponsored an educational session at the meeting that brought together more than 80 medical examiners and coroners to discuss their tissue and organ donation experiences.
Every year, there are approximately **58,000** tissue donors nationwide in the United States. One tissue donor has the potential to touch as many as **75 lives**.

*Tissue recipient Kacey Johnson, a survivor of the Columbine shooting, and her husband, Patrick, who became a Certified Tissue Banking Specialist and is now Director of Tissue Services with Carolina Donor Services, attend the 2017 AATB Annual Meeting with their children Mallory, Bentley, Corban, and Logan.*

**Working together to help achieve AATB’s mission.**

AATB councils, committees, and working groups represent the viewpoints of the various disciplines that relate to tissue donation, recovery, processing, storage, distribution, and transplantation. Each group consists of individual, affiliate, and institutional members of the association interested in that particular discipline or council, giving them the opportunity to work together and with the AATB to make a difference in people’s lives.

**AATB Councils**

- Accredited Tissue Banks
- Physicians
- Processing and Distribution
- Quality
- Recovery and Donor Suitability
- Reproductive

**AATB Committees**

- Accreditation
- American Board of Tissue Banking
- Bylaws and Ethics
- Communications
- Education
- Finance
- Membership
- Nominating and Awards
- Program
- Scientific and Technical Affairs
- Standards

**AATB Working Groups**

- AATB Packaging Guide
- Donor Family Service Ad Hoc
- Emergency Preparedness
- International Group
- Non-Transplant Anatomical Donation Ad Hoc
Walter Recker of LifeCell, an Allergan Affiliate, prepares to demonstrate aseptic technique at the 2017 AATB Annual Meeting.
“It’s a huge privilege and a huge responsibility to be part of this profession. It’s an enormous privilege to speak with people at the hardest times of their lives and help them honor their loved one through the gift of tissue donation. It’s also a huge responsibility to adhere to standards and consider the safety of every recipient. I never imagined that I would have the honor of helping people in this way.”

– Celeste Maureen Hart, CTBS
Manager of Donor Information, Donor Network West
AATB Leadership

as of Dec. 31, 2017

Board of Governors

2017–2019 Executive Committee

Louis Barnes III, CTBS
Chairman
Vivex Biomedical

Diana Buck, CTBS
Chairman-Elect
New England Donor Services

Dan Schultz, M.D.
Immediate Past Chairman
LifeLink Tissue Bank

Jeff Cox, CTBS
Secretary/Treasurer
United Tissue Resources

Frank S. Wilton, IOM, CAE
President and CEO
AATB

2017–2019 Members-at-Large

Kevin Myer
Member-at-Large
LifeGift Organ Donation Center

Jeff Orlowski, CTBS
Member-at-Large
LifeShare Transplant Donor Services of Oklahoma

Beverly Bliss, CTBS
Accredited Tissue Banks Council Co-Chair
RTI Donor Services

George Herrera
Accredited Tissue Banks Council Co-Chair
MTF Biologics

2016–2018 Council Chairs

Lennox Archibald, M.D.
Physicians Council
RTI Surgical

Jeffrey Cartmell, Ph.D.
Processing and Distribution Council
MTF Biologics

Jackie Warn
Quality Council
Nevada Donor Network

Ronda Horstman, CTBS
Recovery and Donor Suitability Council
Cryolife, Inc.

Jaime Shamonki, M.D.
Reproductive Council
California Cryobank, LLC
Staff

Frank S. Wilton  
President and CEO

Roman Hitchev, M.D.  
Vice President and Chief Science Officer

Jennifer Keller  
Vice President of Professional Development

Jason LoVerdi, CTBS  
Vice President of Accreditation

Jon Boyd, CTBS  
Director of Certification and Online Learning

Kathy Crandall  
Director of Finance and Administration

Sarah Gray  
Director of Communications

Jamien Payne  
Director of IT and Membership

Jenny Chatman, CTBS  
Accreditation Manager

Michelle Lewis, ASQ CBA, RAC, CTBS  
CAPA Analyst

Hannah Wing-Bonica  
Content Manager

Fran Kreiner  
Executive Administrative Coordinator

Ashley Milligan  
Administrative Coordinator

Deanna Puglia  
Communication and Program Coordinator

Committee Chairs

as of Dec. 31, 2017

Accreditation Committee  
Diane Wilson, CTBS  
Community Tissue Services

American Board of Tissue Banking Committee  
Jeff Cox, CTBS  
United Tissue Resources

Bylaws and Ethics Committee  
Dean Elliott, Esq.  
AlloSource

Communications Committee  
Cathy Olmo  
Donor Network West

Education Committee  
Louis Jares, CTBS  
MTF Biologics

Finance Committee  
Bryan McPhee  
DCI Donor Services Tissue Bank

Membership Committee  
Mark DeFilippis  
New England Donor Services

Patrick AbdelMessih  
Birth Tissue Donor Services

Nominating and Awards Committee  
Diane Wilson, CTBS  
Community Tissue Services

Scientific and Technical Affairs Committee  
Jeffrey Cartmell, Ph.D.  
MTF Biologics

Standards Committee  
Tim Maye, CTBS  
Vivex Biomedical

Program Committee  
Chris Agle, CTBS  
UMTB Donor Services Foundation
2017 AATB Annual Award Winners

The AATB Achievement Awards:

**George W. Hyatt Memorial Award**
Melissa Greenwald, M.D., Health Resources and Service Administration

**Jeanne C. Mowe Distinguished Service Award**
Thomas Cycyota, CTBS, AlloSource

**Kenneth W. Sell Memorial Award**
Scott Brubaker, CTBS, Food and Drug Administration

The AATB Communication and Education Awards:

**Outstanding Public Education**
*Inspiring Intergenerational Conversations and Overcoming Taboos: Developing Strategic Community Education Partnerships in San Francisco County from Concept to Execution*
Kristina Ruiz-Healy, Donor Network West

**Outstanding Professional Education**
*Kentucky Circuit Clerks’ Trust for Life Regional Trainings*
**Julie Bergin and Shelley Snyder**, Kentucky Organ Donor Affiliates

**The Groundbreaker Award**
*Kentucky Circuit Clerks’ Trust for Life Regional Trainings*
**Julie Bergin and Shelley Snyder**, Kentucky Organ Donor Affiliates

The AATB Abstract Awards:

**Outstanding Scientific Abstract**
*Advanced Methods for Assessing Soft Tissue Ultrastructure: Analysis of Tendon Treatments*
Matthew C. Coombs, Ph.D., Peng Chen, and Hai Yao, Ph.D., Clemson University; Kelvin G. M. Brockbank, Ph.D., and Lindsay Freeman, Tissue Testing Technologies LLC; and Alyce Linthurst Jones, Ph.D., LifeNet Health

**Outstanding Non-Scientific Abstract**
*Utilizing a Hospital Development Tissue Screening Tool to Increase Timely Referrals in VA Hospitals*
Alberta Grunbeck, RN, CTBS, and Laura Walling-Sotolongo, CTBS, New England Donor Services

**Outstanding Scientific Abstract by a CTBS**
*Reducing Authorized Not Recovered Cases by Utilizing a Suitability Review Coordinator*
Angel Pendleton, CTBS; Farid Siddiqui, CTBS, MBBS; and Sam Ritter, CTBS, Carolina Donor Services
Enhancing and Saving Lives

Donated tissue touches many lives. Here are just some of the ways it makes a difference:

**Bone** is used to restore mobility in people who would otherwise be incapacitated or disabled, rebuild a jaw affected by cancer, and reconstruct limbs damaged by trauma or disease.

**Birth tissue** (also referred to as afterbirth, and includes the amniotic membrane, another chorionic membrane, amniotic fluid, and the umbilical cord) is used as a wound covering or barrier.

**Heart valves** can be lifesaving for children born with absent or damaged heart valves and for adults with life-threatening cardiac defects.

**Ligaments and tendons** are used to rebuild joints and restore strength, mobility, and independence for patients injured in accidents or impaired by arthritis.

**Nerves** can restore mobility and sensation to patients who have been injured by disease, infection, or trauma.

**Reproductive tissue** helps create new families.

**Skin grafts** help burn patients heal and can make the difference between life and death.

**Veins and arteries** are used for heart bypass surgery, to restore circulation in legs that otherwise might have to be amputated, and to create shunts for dialysis patients.

**Whole body donation** is crucial for medical education, training, and research.

*Photo credit: LifeNet Health*