

February 24, 2024

Dear AFI Members and Friends:

We are excited about the upcoming AAAAI meeting in Washington, D.C. and I hope to see you all there. There are a lot of changes going on with AFI. This will be my last year as AFI President/Chairperson. After 20 years I am turning over the reins to my very capable colleague, Len Bielory. He will serve a two-year term followed by Elliot Israel and then Joel Brooks. Of course, I am not abandoning AFI but will continue in a new position created call the Executive Vice President or consigliere. As you are aware, we now have a new administrative group that is managing AFI called Impact. The AAAAI meeting will signify the first complete year that they will have been working with AFI. We are getting to know each other, and they are beginning to understand the operations of AFI. I must say, implementing structure into an organization that has been run like a mom-and-pop shop since its inception is challenging but we are getting it done. Beth is still playing a vital role as advisor and board member. I personally am very grateful for all the years of devoted work she and her husband Richie have given to AFI. Thank you, Beth! I again want to acknowledge our founder and friend Bill Silvers who is unable to attend the meeting this year as much as he wants to be there. Bill has been staying very engaged and providing a lot of advice which I am taking.

This year is also special for me in that I will be presiding over the AAAAI meeting as President. It has been very frenetic wearing multiple hats, but I am almost at the finish line. I am very excited about the scientific program which highlights the topic of neuroimmunology as the Presidential theme. There is also a discovery scientific program that starts before the meeting that some of you may be planning to attend. In addition, Yossi Mekori is being honored at this year's AAAAI meeting with the Special Recognition award. There is a large delegation of Israelis journeying to this year's meeting including Alon Hershko, Avi Beigelman, Ilan Dalal, Miguel Stein, and several others who have been provided AFI travel grants to attend the meeting. Many others are attending and presenting in some capacity. I am sorry that our colleague, Arnon Elizur, will not be attending and he will be missed. Arnon, the current IAACI president has started arrangements to host an IAACI/AFI joint meeting December 4<sup>th</sup> to 7<sup>th</sup>. This is an important scientific solidarity meeting with our Israeli colleagues during these very sad and disheartening times, so I am asking everyone to put this meeting on their calendar and plan to attend. I guarantee it will be a wonderful time and an excellent scientific meeting.

At this year's AAAAI meeting, the AAAAI and WAO are cohosting the inaugural international health forum held on Sunday from 3-5:30PM focused on "Health disparities in different regions of the world" with this year's region being the middle east. We have a diverse group of speakers including Alon Hershko from Israel as well as speakers

representing Lebanon, Iran, and Egypt. Other notable events to attend are the Friday night Welcome Kiddush Reception, the Sunday morning Inaugural Bernstein's Family AFI Lectureship breakfast sponsored by GSK with guest speaker and friend John Oppenheimer and finally the Gala Celebration held Sunday evening at the Whittemore House. This year's featured speakers are Stuart Eizenstat whose talk is *'The Situation in Washington Regarding the Upcoming Election and How it Affects Israel'*. Mr. Eizenstat has many accolades but is the current Chair of the United States Holocaust Memorial Council and Special Adviser to the Secretary of State on Holocaust Issues. Also speaking is Walter Reich, M.D., who is the Yitzhak Rabin Memorial Professor of International Affairs, Ethics and Human Behavior, and Professor of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences, at the George Washington University. He will speak on 'History's Return: The Hamas Attack of 10/7, the Global Eruption of Antisemitism, and their Meaning for Israel and the Jewish People'

Please RSVP for both events if you haven't already as soon as possible.

<https://www.allergists4israel.org/>

It is an honor being Chairperson of AFI and overseeing its continued growth and success over the years. As mentioned in the last newsletter, my presidential initiative is to address environmental disparities in underserved populations through volunteerism. It is my continued hope that AFI can participate in some capacity by developing ways we can directly serve the communities we live in by channeling our expertise in Allergy/Immunology through volunteerism.

Each year we continue to provide support for travel grants, mini-fellowships, mini-grants and lectureships. AFI has restarted our research, travel grant and mini-fellowship/sabbatical rotations and applications for these awards/grants are on our updated website. If any of our members are interested in being a host institution, please do not hesitate to apply.

I want to personally thank our board of directors for their continued support and contributions. I want to encourage everyone to continue to be an active member of AFI by submitting your annual dues of \$118 but larger donations are welcomed and appreciated. AFI is only as strong as its membership. Thank you to all our old and new members for your support. To join AFI or renew your membership, simply go on-line to our website, [www.allergists4israel.org](http://www.allergists4israel.org), and submit your annual dues and any additional contributions you may want to make.

Finally, I especially want to thank our current sponsors, GSK, DBV, Regeneron, and Astra Zeneca for their generous support. Without their support we would not be able to provide the quality educational, research and social programming that is so vital to AFI's mission. On behalf of the AFI board of directors and staff, we sincerely thank you for your continued support.

We look forward to seeing you all at the AAAAI meeting in Washington, D.C.

Shalom,

Jonathan A. Bernstein, M.D.  
Chairperson, Allergists for Israel