

Editorial

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Recently, in Boston, the unthinkable happened. And all of the news media, hospital spokespersons, politicians and pundits unceasingly praised the physicians, nurses and emergency medical personnel for their heroism. And right and necessary that was. But, we all know that there were perhaps hundreds or more people who acted with equal dedication, equal technical skill and were in equal emotional pain but who were never mentioned to the public. So at least in this journal, we wish to acknowledge all of those clinical laboratory personnel, the medical imaging personnel, our colleagues in the cast rooms, the pharmacists, and all the rest who made the journey to recovery for all victims the medical miracle that it turned out to be.

The professionals in all of the hospitals who were involved didn't just work in Boston. As triaged patients were sent to distant hospitals, increased workload happened to dozens of hospitals. Without hesitation, Blood Centers from around all over Massachusetts and Rhode Island transferred many blood units so dearly needed.

We note with honor the hundreds of professionals in transfusion services who put aside all of their routine procedures and perhaps even ignored their "regular" emergency procedures in favor of saving lives and/or limbs now. Hundreds of units of blood products would be released over a matter of hours in some of the facilities. Who would have worked that shift? How many stayed late into the night trying to catch up and regain control of a specialty area renowned for its control and discipline? It would not have been easy to release all those blood products as wave after wave of critically injured and bleeding patients came through the emergency room doors. We thank you and even though no one listening to the media would know, all of your patients do too.

We include in this the hundreds of professionals who work in blood centers. Hard as it must have been to first send all you had to Boston, you then had to collect additional units of blood products during the immediate aftermath of the explosion when you too were worried about friends or family. Finally, you had explain gently and carefully to emotionally wrought donors that maybe they could consider waiting to

donate so that the less catastrophic, the less dramatic but vitally important coronary bypass surgeries or emergency Caesarian section or gastric resection can occur in the weeks that follow.

But they are not the only ones to be thanked and the linear nature of writing makes it look as if they were less important for being mentioned later. But none of those procedures could have been completed without information from the chemistry and hematology laboratories. The concerns for kidney failure caused by the trauma and the immense build up of waste products could not have been monitored without you. The amount of anesthesia, the ability to heal, the oxygen status of the cells are all the province of the hematology laboratory. The monitoring of blood clotting and lysis was made possible by the staff in the coagulation laboratories.

While not immediately invested in the crisis, the professionals in the Microbiology laboratory will have to handle the infections caused by the immediate trauma and the crushing injuries but all those that result from procedures, time in hospitals, and the like.

Congratulations too should go to the phlebotomists for what must have been a harrowing and seemingly eternal line of critically injured and shocked patients.

All of these patients will continue to need you. All of the physicians will continue to rely on your work. That no one notices when things go right is a common failing in our society and in our lives. Know at least that those of us in your profession and from across the country know what you did (and perhaps were thinking about how you did it). We say thank you but we know that the carnage would have been so much greater without you. The road to recovery would be so much slow without you.

For what it is worth. Put this up on your bulletin board and at least know that we know whether you are in Boston or Mobile or West.

Thank you again and again. You are Boston Strong.