Welcome from BIVDA’s Chief Executive

2017 marks a big year for BIVDA – it is our 25th Anniversary! A lot of progress has been made since we were established in 1992 and we will be celebrating this milestone in a number of ways. We have included a special article on the back page of this edition outlining the history of BIVDA and how you can participate in the celebrations.

While there have been many changes over the years, one issue that remains a concern across the life sciences sector is the slow adoption of innovative technologies throughout the NHS. As part of the secretariat to the Life Sciences APPG, we hosted a Parliamentary Reception in December to address this very issue. Find out more on page 2!

This edition also features articles on my trip to the India-UK TECH Summit and a thought piece around the value of IVDs and pathology. Promoting the value of IVDs to patients, the NHS and the UK economy will be a key priority for BIVDA this year so keep an eye out for our ‘Value Story’, which will be published later this year.

At BIVDA, we are representing technology that is making a difference every day to both patients and the NHS. We are always very happy to provide more information or meet to discuss anything related to diagnostics in healthcare. Please do not hesitate to contact my colleague Emma Thomas (emma@bivda.co.uk) at any time.

Doris-Ann Williams MBE

BIVDA Supports India-UK TECH Summit

BIVDA’s Chief Executive Doris-Ann Williams MBE was delighted to participate in the India-UK TECH Summit in November 2016, as a member of the Precision Medicine Delegation.

This was a high profile visit from the UK to India to kick off global industrial activity ready for the post-Brexit era. The UK contingent was led by the Prime Minister Theresa May, supported by Department for International Trade (DIT) Secretary of State Liam Fox, DIT Minister Greg Hands and Department of Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) Minister Jo Johnson.

The group also included technology business leaders such as Lord Dyson and GSK’s CEO Andrew Witty, plus a group of 25 technology SMEs, including the CEO of BIVDA member QuantuMDx, Elaine Warburton OBE.

The participants for Precision Medicine alongside Doris-Ann were Dr Richard Barker, Chairman of the Precision Medicine Catapult, Dr Michael Messenger from the Leeds Diagnostics Centre (and recently appointed as Head of the Precision Medicine Centre), Prof. Mark Lawler from Queens University, Belfast, Prof. Graham Ball from Nottingham Trent University, Prof. Sandosh Padmanabhan from the University of Glasgow and Prof. Colin Palmer from the University of Dundee.

The Precision Medicine delegation took part in the presentation and panels at seminars in Delhi and Bangalore over three days. Doris-Ann used the opportunity to emphasise the important role of IVDs by encouraging use of the phrase ‘diagnostic dependent drugs’ instead of ‘companion diagnostics’. While in Delhi the group had the opportunity to visit the Institute of Genomics and Integrative Biology, and in Bangalore there was a visit to the largest cancer hospital.

As well as making possible connections in India, the group also found a lot of mutual synergy, which will be continued during the next few months. For further information, please contact doris-ann@bivda.co.uk.

Doris-Ann Williams MBE
Life Sciences APPG holds Annual Parliamentary Reception

The Life Sciences All-Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) ended 2016 on a high, as it held its annual Parliamentary Reception in Portcullis House on 12 December.

This year’s event focused on the theme of innovation and capitalised on the recent publication of the final report of the Accelerated Access Review (AAR). It was attended by over 100 representatives from the life sciences community including industry, Parliamentarians, academia, the health service and the charitable sector.

Secretariat support to the Life Sciences APPG is provided by Life Sciences UK, which is formed of BIVDA, the Association of the British Pharmaceutical Industry (ABPI), Biolndustry Association (BIA) and the Association of British Healthcare Industries (ABHI). The group is chaired by Kit Malthouse MP and is supported by a range of Parliamentarians. The main role of the APPG for Life Sciences is to raise awareness and understanding of the valuable contribution the life sciences sector provides to the health and wealth of the nation.

The specific focus of the 2016 reception was “Can the NHS be the global capital for research, development and adoption of innovative healthcare products?”, and featured speeches from the Life Sciences APPG’s Vice-Chair, Jo Churchill MP, and Chair of the Prime Minister’s Policy Board, George Freeman MP.

Addressing the audience, Jo Churchill commented: “Parliament, as well as patient groups and industry, has an important role to play in improving patient access to medicines and medical technology. The life sciences industry is making a huge contribution to the health and wealth of the UK but the pace of innovation is outstripping the system. We need to make sure the NHS is equipped to quickly adopt these new medicines and medical technology.”

George Freeman MP, Chair of the Prime Minster’s Policy Board told the reception, “Our world-leading life science sector – which generates over £60 billion and over 220,000 jobs for the UK economy each year, and provides products which the NHS and UK patients rely on every day – is of critical importance to the country.”

Michael Cumper, Vice-President of The Somerville Foundation, also addressed the audience, discussing the NHS from a patient’s perspective.

In addition to the speeches, the Reception featured a range of innovative exhibitions, which helped to demonstrate the variety and importance of technology within healthcare. Representing the IVD industry were Roche Diagnostics and WOUNDCHEK Laboratories. Roche Diagnostics demonstrated their new cobas® Liat System, which is a compact, innovative real-time PCR platform designed for on-demand testing at the point of care or in the laboratory to support time-sensitive diagnoses and treatment decisions. WOUNDCHEK Laboratories also exhibited at the event to talk about their product, WOUNDCHEK™ Protease Status, which is the world’s first point of care test to detect elevated protease activity (EPA) in chronic ulcers. Wounds with EPA have a high probability that they will not heal without appropriate intervention. Non-healing wounds cost the NHS billions of pounds every year and targeting treatment to reduce protease activity can dramatically improve the chances of healing.

We would like to thank everyone who supported the event and made it such a success! The Life Sciences APPG will be holding further events throughout 2017 so watch this space! If you would like further information about the Life Sciences APPG, please contact emma@bivda.co.uk.
The Value of IVDs and Pathology

Towards the end of 2016, Cancer Research UK (CRUK) published a report that evaluated the level of pathology capacity across the UK.

The “Testing Times to Come? An Evaluation of Pathology Capacity across the UK” report found that pathology services in the UK are struggling to cope with the increasing number of patient samples that need to be tested. This is due to a growing and ageing UK population, meaning more people than ever before are being referred for tests including biopsies and blood tests. However, as pathology staff numbers are not growing to meet this rising demand, the inevitable consequence is a lack of capacity for pathology services.

CRUK have issued a number of recommendations as a result, including training and employing more people within pathology and looking at how more people can be attracted to the profession, which BIVDA has supported.

BIVDA’s Response to the CRUK Report

Commenting on report, BIVDA’s Chief Executive Doris-Ann Williams MBE said:

“It is impossible to overstate the importance of pathology services to the NHS. Around 70% of clinical decisions by healthcare professionals are already made using an in vitro diagnostic (IVD) and with an ageing and growing population, demand is only going to rise.

Pathology is key not only for the diagnosis of patients, but for the successful and efficient treatment and management of long term conditions too. Advances in IVDs can improve the time to diagnosis, and better inform treatment choices, leading to improved outcomes for patients and a more efficient use of NHS resources.

I would like to see investment directed at recruiting and training the pathology workforce of the future to help ensure that all patients receive a timely diagnosis.

However, it is also vital that we invest in innovative IVD technologies, such as digital pathology, which would allow the best use of the trained pathology specialists we currently have.

For the benefit of patients, it is time for pathology to be recognised as being at the very heart of the NHS.”

Yet the report has highlighted more than just the diminishing capacity of pathology services; it has also reminded us all just how important pathology is for the NHS and patients.

It is often quoted that 70% of clinical decisions by healthcare professionals are made using an in vitro diagnostic test. Yet only £700 million is spent on IVD products by the NHS – less than 1% of its budget – and only £3 billion on pathology.

Here at BIVDA, we feel that IVDs and pathology need to be recognised for being at the heart of the NHS, rather than as a ‘backroom’ service. Not only do IVDs help to diagnose patients, they also help to monitor, screen and assess people for potential health problems while allowing people to manage their own conditions.

Despite these benefits, we often receive feedback from members that they do not feel the value of IVDs is fully understood by policymakers, clinicians and stakeholders. This is why BIVDA has decided that a key focus of 2017 will be on promoting the value of IVDs to patients, the NHS and UK economy.

We will be publishing our ‘value story’ later in the year, but in the meantime, if you would like further information on how IVDs can benefit patients and the NHS, please contact doris-ann@bivda.co.uk.
Antimicrobial resistance (AMR) has long been a problem that is now becoming a critical threat, as the incidence of AMR rises and the range of effective antibiotics continues to decline. There has been a welcome recognition of the value of in vitro diagnostics (IVD) in the battle against AMR recently, such as in Lord O’Neill’s Review on AMR. Often, however, this recognition concentrates on the development of new diagnostics. While this is a vital focus, we should not ignore existing diagnostics that, if adopted more widely, could make a vital difference now.

Indeed, UK companies such as Mast Group are committed in supporting the NHS and clinicians in the ongoing battle against AMR and can offer a range of specialised products, such as the Mast Uri® System, designed for the reliable detection of resistant organisms. An innovative, semi-automated laboratory solution for the microbiological analysis of urine samples, the Mast Uri® System offers higher throughputs, simplified processing and rapid turnaround times (typically >95% results reported within 24 hours), while significantly reducing cost and waste in comparison to traditional bacterial culture based methodologies. This enables laboratories to make more efficient and effective use of their staff allowing for approximately 50% of staff time to be re-allocated; essential within today’s NHS.

The Mast Uri® System is proving to be advantageous in assisting in the early detection of AMR, helping to contain the spread of resistant bacterial strains and allowing for the optimisation of patient treatment, as well as supporting antibiotic stewardship. Vitally, the use of such a test also benefits the patient by allowing for a more rapid escalation or de-escalation of therapy in the acute setting, in addition to swift patient review in the community, allowing the correct antibiotic to be initiated at the earliest possible stage.

In November 2016, Mast opened a modern state of the art facility to which the company has now transferred its manufacturing. Mast Group Managing Director Chris Oliver also attended a roundtable earlier this month for life science SME companies, hosted by Secretary of State for Health Jeremy Hunt MP, to discuss how smaller UK manufacturers can work with the NHS and play a significant role in the new industrial strategy. The Mast Group is continuing with its programme to invest in both its manufacturing facilities and further research and development of innovative products to serve the needs of both the national and international markets.

Please don’t hesitate to contact the Chief Executive, Doris-Ann Williams if you would like any further information about any of the aspects of this issue or about in vitro diagnostics in general. She is always more than willing to visit you in Westminster.

British In Vitro Diagnostics Association Tel: 0845 6188224 Email: enquiries@bivda.co.uk Website: www.bivda.co.uk