
Beyond The Pump

Brigida “Bibi” Aguerrevere CCP | Author: Emily Thunstrom-Kahring

Comments or suggestions for Beyond the Pump articles are welcomed and encouraged. Please contact the National Office: ABCP@ABCP.ORG

Previous “Beyond the Pump” articles can be found on the ABCP website: www.abcp.org

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August 2020: In Memoriam Sal Guercio

2021: Advent of CCP In Memoriam List

In Memoriam

The ABCP is often notified of the passing of one of our own by family, friends, or colleagues. If you would like to communicate the loss of a CCP please contact the National Office (ABCP@ABCP.org).



Brigida “Bibi” Aguerrevere

I, along with many of you, may have taken for granted the training, certification, and systems in place that have established perfusion as a safe and successful profession in the US. We all benefit from these systems and cannot fathom them not being there, as they ensure us and our patients a safe system of high quality and consistent care. Brigida “Bibi” Aguerrevere, CCP recognized the importance of such processes and has spent her career applying this knowledge to the Latin American perfusion community.

Bibi began her career in Venezuela as a pediatric cardiac operating room nurse, while also caring for her patients pre and postoperatively in the intensive care unit. “I learned about congenital (hearts) and was able to see the evolution of the patient”. She then pursued perfusion school. Ultimately deciding on Texas Heart Institute (THI) for a variety of reasons, one being that in the 80’s Bibi’s grandfather had coronary artery bypass graft (CABG) surgery at THI by Dr. Cooley. Another motivating factor was that her mentor, Dr. Richard Gibson, a Venezuelan pediatric cardiologist, had trained at Texas Children’s. “I had great teachers and friends (at THI)”. She fondly recalls her conversations with Terry Crane and Kimberly Swan, when first interviewing to get into THI’s perfusion program.

After training at THI in 2006-2007 and becoming board certified, she took it upon herself to establish providing high quality education in Latin-America. “My experience (at THI) was so good that I wanted to transmit it to Latin- America, and life gave me the opportunity to open a perfusion school as a master’s program in a beautiful place in Dominican Republic”. To date, there are approximately seven perfusion schools in Latin-America, with only one of them being a master’s program. Universidad Nacional Pedro Henriquez Urena (UNPHU), the school Bibi started in the Dominican Republic, has graduated three classes to date. Even though it is not required for Bibi, she has kept her ABCP CCP status active, and feels that in doing so “it has helped me so much to stay up to date with the profession”.



The American Board of Cardiovascular Perfusion

“The American Board of Cardiovascular Perfusion (ABCP) has taught me commitment with my daily activities, and it has added value and quality to my career. Perfusion is a great profession with a huge responsibility, I decided to spread this process because I know Latin-American perfusionists deserve to be organized in terms of education and continuing education”. Starting in 2019, Bibi and The Latin American Perfusion Association (ALAP) took on the enormous project of starting up a Latin-American Board of Cardiovascular Perfusion. “Of course, it has been tough, especially at the beginning, I always remember what Ed Delany said to me, “Bibi you just go on, keep going and don’t stop”.



With the exception of Brazil, which has its own board exam, the quality board certification covers perfusionists in all of Latin America, and it's approximately 1200 members. The ALAP's mission with starting this quality certification is to “seek to raise the integral level of the perfusionist and standardize both the training and the practice of perfusion in Latin America”. The Latin American Board of Cardiovascular Perfusion has been able to have a collaboration with the ABCP, Spanish Society of CP, and the European Board.

The first exam was May 29, 2021. 130 perfusionists took this exam. The perfusionists who pass the exam hold the certification Perfusionistas Clinic Certificado (PCC) . Bibi describes the exam as “still in the inclusion period (first phase), which allows all perfusionists to sit for the exam with minimum requirements (perfusion diploma if they have one, and a letter from their employer)”. The passing rate for this inclusion period is set at 51% and is currently being offered twice a year.

The American Board of Cardiovascular Perfusion

There has been a total of three exams administered, prior to the May 2022 exam, and 210 perfusionists have now obtained PCC status. Starting in 2023, to formalize the education requirement, perfusionists who would like to sit for the PCC exam will be required to have graduated from a program accredited by the Latin American Perfusion Association (ALAP). The passing rate for the regular period will increase to 71%. To maintain certification, the perfusionists will be required to pump forty cases per year, and obtain forty-five CEUs, in a three-year period. The ultimate goal is to establish this certification process as a requirement for all practicing perfusionists in Latin-America. Bibi and the ALAP “have contacted the Society of Thoracic Surgeons (STS) and had a meeting with the Latin American chapter, they are willing to help us in recognizing us as a Board, although in the meeting they ask us to contact LACES which is the Latin American Society of Cardiothoracic Surgeons, and we are in advanced conversations with them”.

The Latin-American Board of Cardiovascular Perfusion is currently under the ALAP. In the near future it will become a separate board. Currently, there is a “need to find an agency to accredit the perfusion programs so we can separate ALAP and the board, similar to how it happened with American Board of Cardiovascular Perfusion and The American Society of ExtraCorporeal Technology (AmSECT)”.

Brazil is currently part of ALAP, but also has its own governing board. Brazilian perfusionists are welcome to take the Latin American Board certification, with recertification process under the Brazilian board. Approximately half of Latin American perfusionists are from Brazil, and all are currently working in Brazil.

It is an incredible accomplishment for the Latin American perfusionists, and in turn, all of their patients. Speaking with Bibi, you would never know how much she has done because of her humble personality, but it is easy to see her passion to give the Latin- American perfusionists and patients the best education and highest expectations. The Latin-American perfusionists have welcomed, and seem to be excited, in all of Bibi’s hard work, helping to create this PCC Board. They “are interested, the response has been massive. We have created a strong unification in standing up as a profession”.

Those who would like to explore the Latin-American Board of Cardiovascular Perfusion’s website can access it via: www.boardlatinoamericanodeperfusion.com

