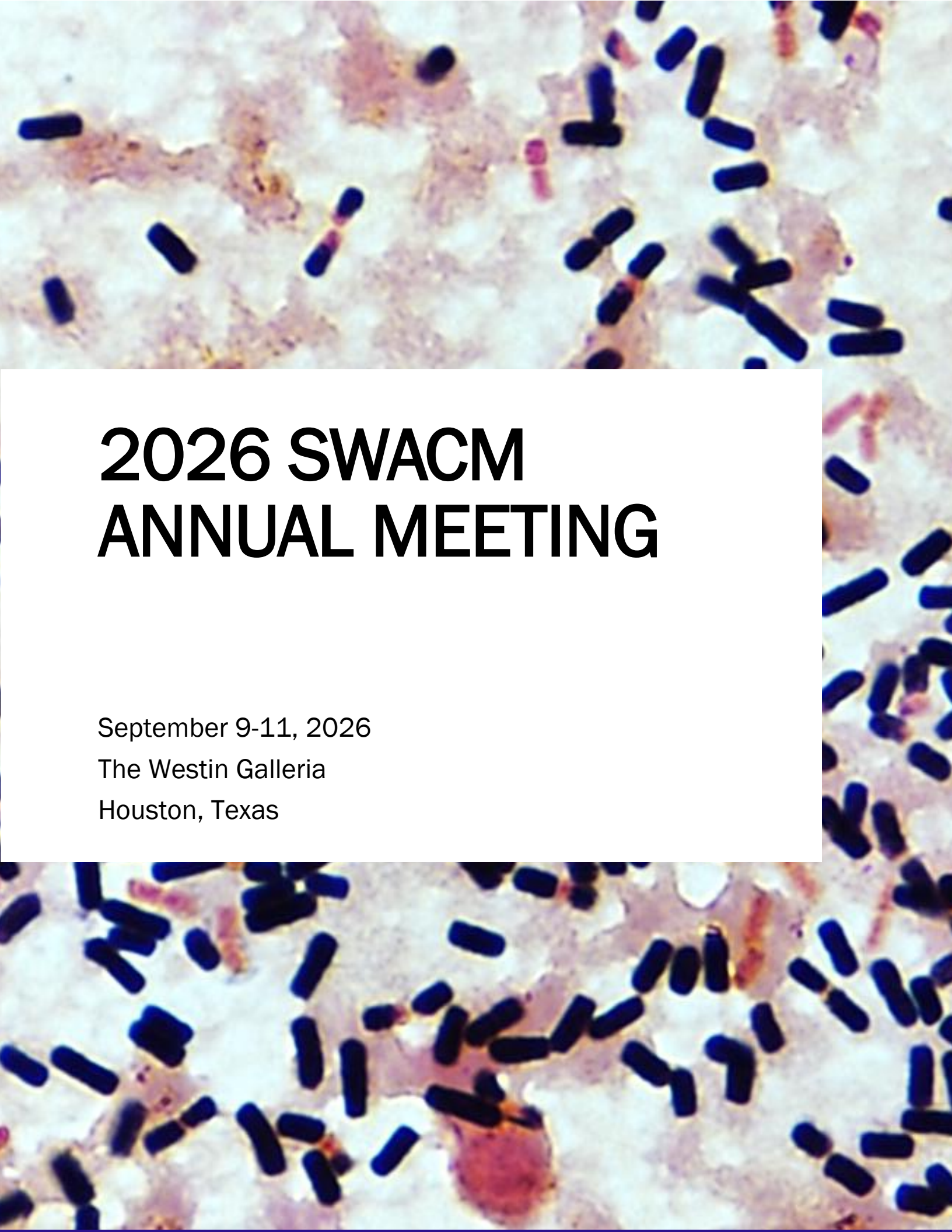


A microscopic image showing numerous dark blue, rod-shaped bacteria (likely Bacillus anthracis spores) scattered across a light pinkish, textured background. The bacteria are in various orientations, some appearing in pairs or small clusters.

2026 SWACM ANNUAL MEETING

September 9-11, 2026

The Westin Galleria

Houston, Texas

Hotel and Travel

Location: The Westin Galleria Houston
5060 W. Alabama St.
Houston, Texas 77056
(713) 960-8100

Reserve your room by August 18, 2026 by visiting www.swacm.org

Room Rate: Single/Double: \$159

Parking: Self-parking: Free
Valet: \$34 daily, \$58 overnight

Air Travel: George Bush Intercontinental Airport (IAH)
All major airlines, hub for United Airlines

William P. Hobby Airport (HOU)
Hub for Southwest Airlines

Meeting Registration: www.swacm.org

Continuing Education Credits

SWACM is approved as a provider of continuing education programs in the clinical laboratory sciences by the ASCLS P.A.C.E.® Program. SWACM programs are approved for California licensed clinical laboratory scientists and personnel. PACE credits will be distributed at the meeting through electronic surveys, which will be provided via QR code at the end of each session. Credits will be emailed each night after the event.

Posters and Case Studies

Submit a case report or abstract at www.swacm.org by **August 15, 2026**. Cash prizes will be awarded for the best research poster and best case study. Posters must be displayed by the start of the general symposia on Thursday, September 10, 2026. Authors should be present for viewing and judging from 1:00 - 2:30 PM that day. Poster awards will be announced during the business meeting on Friday, September 11, 2026.

Microbial Masterpieces Competition

Showcase your creativity by transforming microbiology into art! Submit your agar art, microbial photography, or other microbiology-inspired creations for the inaugural Microbial Masterpieces Competition. Submit your entry at www.swacm.org by **September 1, 2026**.

All entries (or photo) will be displayed during the SWACM Annual Meeting, where attendees will vote to select their favorite masterpiece. The winner will be announced during the meeting on September 11.

Whether you're an experienced artist or simply enjoy expressing your passion for microbiology in a creative way, we encourage you to participate.

Exhibits

Exhibits will be in Woodway I & II. Representatives of exhibiting companies will display their products and be available to answer questions and give demonstrations. Drinks and hors d'oeuvres will be served during the evening exhibits on Thursday, September 10.

Our vendors primarily fund the SWACM Annual Meeting and their importance to SWACM's success cannot be overstated.

Exhibit hours:

Thursday: 1:00 pm – 2:30 pm
4:30 pm – 6:00 pm
Friday: 1:00 pm – 2:30 pm

Exhibitor set-up:

Wednesday: 1:00 pm – 7:00 pm
Thursday: 7:00 am – 11:00 am

Exhibitor breakdown:

Friday: 2:30 pm – 5:00 pm

For exhibit information contact:

Rhonda Fossett: (817) 568-3343 or Rhonda.Fossett@adventhealth.com

SWACM Board Meeting (Invitation Only)

The SWACM Board of Directors will meet on Wednesday, September 10 at 5 pm in the Richmond room.

Wednesday, September 9, 2026

07:00 am – 07:45 am

Breakfast and seminar sponsored by
Woodway III



08:00 am – 11:30 am

Morning Workshops

WS1: Bug-to-Drug: Antimicrobial Susceptibility Testing 101

Location: Plaza I

Ayesha Khan, PhD, D(ABMM)
University of California, Irvine

Objectives:

1. Describe the role of susceptibility testing in patient care and the criteria for determining when it is appropriate to perform susceptibility testing
2. List several examples of manual and automated phenotypic susceptibility testing methods along with the advantages and limitations of these methods
3. Explain the differences between phenotypic and genotypic susceptibility testing methods and how these two different susceptibility testing methods complement each other as well novel susceptibility testing methods
4. Define clinical breakpoints, the role breakpoints play in clinical decisions for treating infections, where they are published and the process for how breakpoints are developed and updated

5. Review and discuss common antimicrobial resistance mechanisms through several case-based exercises integrating several concepts of susceptibility testing and patient care considerations
6. Describe the CAP and CLIA regulations pertaining to the initial verification and validation of manual and automated susceptibility testing methods, updated breakpoints, recurring quality control, IQCP, and proficiency testing
7. Explain the role susceptibility testing has in diagnostic stewardship and antimicrobial stewardship demonstrated through several case-based exercises.

WS2: A Moldy but Goody: Mold Identification at the Benchtop

Location: Plaza II

Shawn Lockhart, PhD, D(ABMM)

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

Objectives:

1. Group molds into preliminary classifications that assist clinicians
2. List the most common molds by disease and/or specimen
3. Identify the most commonly seen molds by microscopic appearance

10:00 am – 10:15 am

Coffee break sponsored by **Microbiologics**



11:30 am – 01:00 pm

Lunch and seminar sponsored by **BRUKER**

Location: Woodway III



01:00 pm – 04:00 pm

Afternoon Workshops

WS3: Parasitology: The Good, The Bad, and the Bugly

Location: Plaza I

Cameron Brown, PhD, D(ABMM)

Baylor College of Medicine

Objectives:

1. Describe basic diagnostic procedures for blood and intestinal parasites
2. Create a framework for classifying and identifying parasites
3. Identify frequent and high-consequence parasites

WS4: When Results Disagree: A Practical Guide To Troubleshooting Traditional AST vs. Molecular Testing Results

Location: Plaza II

Nicole J. Tarlton, PhD, D(ABMM)

Endeavor Health

Objectives:

1. Describe common mechanisms of resistance in gram-positive (*Staphylococcus*, *Enterococcus*) and gram-negative bacteria (Enterobacterales), including the genes mediating antimicrobial resistance (*mecA/C*, *vanA/B*, ESBLs, carbapenemases) and associated phenotypes

2. Describe methods (molecular, phenotypic, other) that can be used to detect common mechanisms of resistance (the gene, protein, or phenotype) in Gram-positive and Gram-negative bacteria.
3. Demonstrate strategies to troubleshoot genotype vs. phenotype discrepancies between molecular (rapid BCID panels) and antimicrobial susceptibility testing results and how to report results when discrepancies cannot be resolved (including CLSI-based recommendations)

Thursday, September 10, 2026

Location: Woodway III, unless otherwise noted

07:00 am – 07:45 am **Breakfast and seminar sponsored by** 

08:00 am – 08:15 am **Introduction and Welcome**

08:15 am – 09:15 am **Molecular Testing for *Candida auris***

Michael Loeffelholz, PhD, D(ABMM)
Cepheid

Objectives:

1. Discuss *C. auris* epidemiology, clinical impact, and drug resistance
2. Describe the latest detection methods
3. Discuss patient and economic impact of molecular screening methods
4. Understand practical implications of implementing molecular screening for *C. auris*

9:15 am – 10:15 am **How AST Breakpoints are Defined and Why They Matter**

Virginia Pierce, MD
University of Michigan

Objectives:

1. Outline three categories of data that are weighed when setting a clinical antimicrobial susceptibility testing breakpoint
2. Identify at least one factor that may lead to reassessment of a clinical breakpoint
3. Explain the importance of applying scientifically current breakpoints in the interpretation of antimicrobial susceptibility testing results

10:15 am – 10:30 am **Coffee break sponsored by** 

10:30 am – 11:30 am **Lues Clues: What Clinicians Actually Do with Lab Results**

Ryan Rochat, MD
Texas Children's Hospital

Objectives:

1. Describe how syphilis serologic results (treponemal and nontreponemal) are actually used in real time clinical decision making
2. Identify common clinical pitfalls and unintended consequences of syphilis testing
3. Explain how testing algorithms (traditional vs reverse) perform differently in specific clinical contexts

4. Apply clinical context (history, exam, prior treatment, risk, and timing) to interpret syphilis test results

11:30 am – 01:00 pm

Lunch and seminar sponsored by Q-LINEA 

01:00 pm – 02:30 pm

Exhibits and Poster Judging
Woodway I & II

02:30 pm – 03:30 pm

Closing the Loop: Integrating Microbiology and Antimicrobial Stewardship for Timely Clinical Decision Making

Brittany Rodriguez, PharmD, BCIDP
Grant Stimes, PharmD, MPA, BCPS, BCIDP
Awilda River-Acosta, MLS(ASCP)
Texas Children's Hospital

Objectives:

1. Identify common collaboration points, communication requirements, and operational challenges between microbiology laboratories and pharmacy/AMS teams
2. Describe the overlapping priorities of stewardship and microbiology, highlighting specific clinical needs and laboratory pain points
3. Discuss practical strategies and the role of rapid diagnostics in optimizing patient care

03:30 pm – 04:30 pm

Susceptibility Testing of Anaerobes

Samantha Shannon, MLS(ASCP)
Mayo Clinic

Objectives:

1. Discuss when antimicrobial susceptibility testing (AST) is appropriate for anaerobic organisms recovered from clinical samples
2. Detail AST principles and methods for anaerobic organisms
3. Explore disk diffusion methodology for anaerobic AST

04:30 pm – 06:00 pm

Exhibits and Wine & Cheese Reception
Woodway I & II

Friday, September 11, 2026

Location: Woodway III, unless otherwise noted

07:00 am – 07:45 am

Breakfast and seminar sponsored by  delvebio

08:00 am – 09:00 am

Integrating Syndromic Molecular Panels into the Clinical Microbiology Workflow: Verification, Implementation, and Clinical Utility

Belkys Sanchez, PhD, D(ABMM)
Houston Methodist Hospital

Objectives:

1. Define performance characteristics assessed during verification of FDA-approved/cleared multiplex PCR syndromic panels

2. Discuss strategies for verification testing of multiplex PCR panels in the clinical microbiology laboratory
3. Describe advantages and limitations of multiplex PCR panels for pathogen detection across diverse specimen types
4. Identify considerations for implementation of multiplex PCR syndromic panels into routine laboratory workflows

09:00 am – 10:00 am

Respiratory Disease and Multiplex Testing

Jim Dunn, PhD, D(ABMM)
Texas Children's Hospital

Objectives:

1. Discuss the epidemiology and impact of respiratory virus disease
2. Describe the multiplexing capabilities for currently available respiratory virus assays and the rationale for test selection
3. Discuss the guidelines and recommendations for nucleic acid-based testing of respiratory viruses
4. Identify strategies to effectively implement suitable multiplex molecular assays for respiratory viruses for different patient populations

10:00 am – 10:15 am

Coffee break sponsored by



10:15 am – 10:30 am

SWACM Business Meeting and Awards Presentation

10:30 am – 11:30 am

Grambiguous: Microscopy Oddities

Steve Dallas, PhD, D(ABMM)
University of Texas Health Science Center San Antonio

Objectives:

1. Recognize unusual microscopic findings
2. Postulate probable pathogens based on microscopic morphologies
3. Propose reporting strategies in the context of uncertainty
4. Discuss the future of AI assistance in microscopy

11:30 am – 01:00

Lunch and seminar sponsored by



01:00 pm – 02:30 pm

Exhibits

Woodway I & II

02:30 pm – 03:30 pm

The Public Health Laboratory as a Clinical Partner: Functions, Capabilities, and Expectations

Javonte Davis, MS
Ricardo Quijano, MB(ASCP)
Houston Health Department

Objectives:

1. Explain the core functions of the Houston Health Dept. Medical Microbiology Laboratory and its major testing programs
2. Describe the clinical and public health value of the Antimicrobial Resistance (AR) Lab Network
3. Identify key expectations for effective collaboration between clinical laboratories and the public health laboratory

4. Illustrate how AR Lab Network findings inform clinical and public health action
5. Describe the structure and function of the Houston Laboratory Response Network (LRN), including its operation role within the City of Houston's public health system and integration with local, federal and law enforcement agencies
6. Explain the biosafety level capacities (BSL2 and BSL3) of the Houston LRN and identify the agents routinely tested for bioterrorism events and emerging infectious disease
7. Summarize how the Houston LRN supports clinical partners through surge capacity, specialized testing for emerging diseases, outreach and training activities, technical consultations, and site visits
8. Review and discuss the November 2025 *Bacillus cereus biovar anthracis* case study as a practical example of LRN operations and response

03:30 pm – 04:30 pm

High-Stakes Parasitology: Lessons from Three Diagnostic Case Studies

Cameron Brown, PhD, D(ABMM)
Baylor College of Medicine

Objectives:

1. Recognize clinical and laboratory scenarios in which parasitic infections require immediate recognition and escalation
2. Describe laboratory strategies to improve detection of low burden parasitic infections
3. Apply case-based lessons to everyday bench practice

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