



ASM Washington, DC Branch Meeting
Friday, April 10, 2026
Howard University
Illuminating the Microbial Universe Together



AMERICAN
SOCIETY FOR
MICROBIOLOGY

9:00-9:45AM

Check-in

9:45AM

Opening remarks
Dr. Karl Thompson
President, ASM DC Branch

10:00AM

Morning Session
**Lightning Talks (3-5 min); Longer Talks (12-15 min)*
Convener: Dr. Karl Thompson
President, ASM DC Branch

10:00AM* - Characterizing the physiologically-relevant β -glucanases in the saprophytic bacterium *Cellvibrio japonicus*, **Josephine Szczyrbak, University of Maryland, Baltimore County**

10:05AM* - "Trailing"- endpoints for D-GATR-3 peptide against MRSA, **Santhosh Kumar Pedada, George Mason University**

10:10AM* - The small RNA Teg16 represses *rsbV* to control SigB-dependent gene expression in *Staphylococcus aureus*, **Olivia McGlaughlin, Howard University**

10:15AM - The biogeography of defense island architecture in the Antarctic dry valleys, **Pia Sen, George Washington University**

10:30AM - SroA coordinates stress-responsive transcriptional remodeling and represses nitrate respiration in *Staphylococcus aureus*, **Sagar Pasham, PhD, Howard University**

10:45AM Questions for speakers

10:55AM

Sponsor presentations and discussion
Convener: Dr. Dennis DiMaggio
Treasurer, ASM DC Branch

[ASM Journals](#) and [ASM Press](#)

***Silver sponsor:** [Oxford Nanopore](#) Nanopore-only microbial isolate sequencing solution

****Gold sponsor:** [Diasorin](#) Molecular Diagnostics



11:25AM Keynote Invited Speaker
Kumaran Ramamurthi, PhD
Senior Investigator, NIH/NCI
“Orthogonal Cell Division in *Staphylococcus aureus*”

12:30-1:30PM Lunch (provided)

1:30PM *Lightning Talks Afternoon Session
Convener: Hannah Snyder
ASM Young Ambassador for Washington, DC

1:30PM* - Evaluation of ATCC® Quantitative Synthetic RNA from Zika virus for diagnostic development and validation, **Sydney McKnight, MS, ATCC**

1:35PM* - The interplay of transcription factors in keeping with physiological requirements in the amphibolic *gal* operon of *E. coli*, **Dale Lewis, PhD, National Institutes of Health**

1:40PM* - Identifying staphylococcal secreted products that are sensed by *Pseudomonas aeruginosa*, **Devin Teehan, Georgetown University**

1:45PM* - Identification of *Pseudomonas aeruginosa* adhesins that facilitate *in vivo* catheter colonization, **Jared Carter, University of Maryland, College Park**

1:50PM* - Identification of essential *N*-acetylglucosamine transport and metabolic proteins in *Cellvibrio japonicus*, **Giulia Mascelli, University of Maryland, Baltimore County**

1:55PM* - Transposon mutant screen identifies genes involved in *Francisella novicida* biofilm formation, **Annika Geiger, George Mason University**

2:05PM* - Characterization of β -glucan specific TonB-dependent receptors in *Cellvibrio japonicus*, **Rachel Manning, University of Maryland, Baltimore County**

2:10PM Questions for speakers

2:20PM Break and Raffle
Event Feedback Survey
Abby Cunanan
Secretary, ASM DC Branch

Dr. Dennis DiMaggio
Treasurer, ASM DC Branch

Group Photo

2:35PM Afternoon Session
*Lightning Talks (3-5 min); **Longer Talks** (12-15 min)
Convener: Dr. Karl Thompson
President, ASM DC Branch

2:35PM* - How *E. coli* manages growth in cold temperatures is highly dependent on growth conditions, **Ceanna Cooney, National Institutes of Health**

2:40PM* - Unexpected activity of IPK2 links pyrophosphate metabolism to phosphate signaling in *Candida albicans*, **Emmanuel Oluto, Georgetown University**

2:45PM - A metabolite morphogen coordinates multicellular development in *Bacillus subtilis*, **Taylor Updegrave, PhD, National Institutes of Health**

3:00PM - 16S ribosomal RNA modification drives transcript-specific translation efficiency, **Zac Park, PhD, National Institutes of Health**

3:15PM - Polymicrobial dynamics and within-host adaptation of *Proteus mirabilis* drive pathogenic potential in the chronically catheterized urinary tract **Namrata Deka, SUNY Buffalo**

3:30PM - Agglutination of bacteria by D-GATR-3 peptide, **Kushal Barailly, George Mason University**

3:45PM Questions for speakers

4:00PM Concluding Remarks

Networking and Social Mixer - *Andy's Pizza*