



## Member Spotlight

**Name & Credentials:** Matthew Cusick, PhD, D(ABHI)



**Job title and place of employment:** Director in training, Northwestern University

**Graduated from:** Creighton University, University of Vermont and University of Utah

**How long have you been an ASHI member?** 3 Years

**Your first ASHI meeting (where was it held? when? special memories?)** I attended the 2009 meeting in San Francisco.

**What made you decide to work in this field?** I earned my doctorate degree at the University of Utah in experimental pathology with Dr. David Eckels. My dissertation was to understand mechanisms by which the hepatitis c virus (HCV) is able to persist in the face of active cellular and humoral responses. In addition, I was exposed to the working of an HLA laboratory. After completing my doctorate work I began a postdoctoral fellowship under the mentorship of Dr. Robert Fujinami at the University of Utah. The Fujinami group uses Theiler's murine encephalomyelitis virus infection to address a variety of immunological questions associated with seizures, and how the innate immune response could have a pivotal role in the development of epilepsy. In addition, I had a number of ongoing projects studying the role of the adaptive immune system's role in multiple sclerosis (MS) using both human in vitro assays and in vivo "humanized" (HLADR15) murine model of MS.

I was initially drawn to work in HLA due to the "rebellious nature" of transplant. Basically, transplant breaks all of the rules, in which, we are putting a foreign object into a person with the knowledge that this person's immune system will immediately start fighting this foreign object. I had exposure to an HLA lab during my graduate work and thought that the fusion between basic science and clinical application using the HLA system was fascinating.

**What do you find to be the most rewarding aspect of your work?** Being a part of the scientific process that hopefully improves the quality of life for another person. This process allows us to be a part of a caring community consisting of the HLA community, providers, coordinators, etc. and most importantly the patients.

**Tell us a fun fact about yourself...likes? dislikes? Hobbies?** I love to downhill ski but have found après-ski to be more to my liking these days.