

## Meeting Logistics

Item	Health Research Advisory Committee (HRAC)
Date	January 16, 2020
Time	9:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m.
Location	Health and Welfare Building, 625 Forster St, Room 812, Harrisburg PA
Purpose/Focus	Review the work of the Committee, begin the planning process to establish the health research priorities for State Fiscal Year 2021-2022
Notetaker	Lori A. Behe, Court Reporter, Sargent's Court Reporting Services, Inc. and Health Research Office staff, Pennsylvania Department of Health

## Attendees

### HRAC Members:

- Sarah Boateng, MHA, Executive Deputy Secretary, chair designee, Pennsylvania Department of Health  
*Via telephone:*
- Arthur Levine, MD, Senior Vice Chancellor for Health Sciences and Dean of the School of Medicine, University of Pittsburgh
- Michele Masucci, PhD, Vice President for Research; Professor, Department of Geography and Urban Studies; Director, Information Technology and Society Research Group, Temple University
- Donna Gentile O'Donnell, PhD, Special Assistant to the President and Senior Vice President of Innovation Programs and Partnerships, Thomas Jefferson University
- Karen Wolk Feinstein, PhD, President and Chief Executive Officer of the Jewish Healthcare Foundation and Pittsburgh Regional Health Initiative
- Peter Tombros, MBA, Professor and Distinguished Executive in Residence, Eberly College of Science BS/MBA Program, Penn State University
- Pat Vance, retired PA state Senator, having represented the 31st State Senatorial District

### *Absent:*

- Dwight Davis, MD, Professor of Medicine and Medical Director, Cardiac Rehabilitation Program, Pennsylvania State University School of Medicine
- Michael Parmacek, MD, Frank Wister Thomas Professor of Medicine; Chair, Department of Medicine and Director of the Penn Cardiovascular Institute, University of Pennsylvania School of Medicine

### Others Present:

#### *Department of Health (DOH) staff*

- Meghna Patel, MHA, Deputy Secretary for Health Innovation
- Penny E. Harris, M.Ed., CAC, LPC, Director, Health Research Office
- Susan Guy, Public Health Program Administrator, Health Research Office
- Chris Albright, Administrative Officer, Health Research Office
- Pamela Brown, Management Technician, Health Research Office
- Emily Roussel, Executive Assistant to Deputy Secretary Meghna Patel
- Keith Fickel, Esq., Senior Counsel, Office of Legal Counsel
- Meaghan Abbott, Director of Intergovernmental Affairs

*Others in attendance:*

- Mike Lane, Wojdak Government Relations
- Benjamin Dannels, Greenlee Partners
- Margaret Durkin, Bravo Group
- Mary Keenan, Webber Associates on behalf of Star Institute
- John Anthony, Pennsylvania State University
- Michael Smith, University of Pennsylvania
- Charles Alcorn, private citizen

*Via telephone:*

- Maggie McDonald, PhD, Office of Academic Affairs, Health Science, University of Pittsburgh on the phone with Dr. Art Levine

**Agenda**

<b>ID</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Owner</b>	<b>Time</b>
1	Welcome and Introductions	Sarah Boateng, Executive Deputy Secretary	9:00 AM
2	Review and Approval of Minutes for September 12, 2019 meeting	Sarah Boateng, Executive Deputy Secretary	9:15 AM
3	Review of CURE program, priorities and other updates	Sarah Boateng, Executive Deputy Secretary	9:20 AM
4	Update on Peer and Performance Review Vendor	Sarah Boateng, Executive Deputy Secretary	9:40 AM
5	Non-formula Priority State Fiscal Year 2021-2022 planning	Sarah Boateng, Executive Deputy Secretary	9:45 AM
6	Discuss any questions and concerns from the Committee Members	Sarah Boateng, Executive Deputy Secretary	10:00 AM
7	Closing remarks and next steps/schedule	Sarah Boateng, Executive Deputy Secretary	10:50 AM

## Discussion

ID	Discussion
1	<p><i>Sarah Boateng</i>, Executive Deputy Secretary, introduced herself as the chair due to Secretary Levine being unable to join the conversation. Committee members, DOH staff and public attendees introduced themselves.</p>
2	<p><i>Dr. O'Donnell</i> moved to accept the meeting minutes of September 12, 2019. <i>Dr. Levine</i> second. No discussion. No opposition or abstentions. The motion passed unanimously.</p>
3	<p><i>Executive Deputy Secretary Boateng</i> provided an overview of the Tobacco Settlement Act, explaining the allocation of research funding into Formula 70%/Non-formula 30%.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• \$1M set aside for Spinal Cord Research Program. Spinal Cord Research Advisory Committee</li> <li>• The State Fiscal Year (SFY) 2019-2020 estimated amount provided by the Governor's Budget Office for CURE health research is <u>\$45,774,000</u>.</li> <li>• The estimated amount for the 2019-2020 non-formula Alzheimer priority is \$10,946,507. The Alzheimer Request for Application (RFA) received 8 Letters of Intent with a due date for the applications on January 23<sup>rd</sup> and a peer review panel is scheduled to convene on March 17 and 18, 2020. The grant period will start June 1, 2020.</li> <li>• Formula fund priorities for 2021-2022 were approved to remain clinical, health services, and/or biomedical research. <i>Dr. Levine</i> moved that the research priorities for formula funds remain the same as in prior years. <i>Dr. O'Donnell</i> seconded the motion. No discussion. No opposition or abstentions. The motion passed unanimously.</li> <li>• <i>"For the purpose of priority setting, the Health Research Advisory Committee recommends combining the two non-formula funding categories of clinical and health services research and other research for the 2021-2022 SFY. At least 50% of the funds must be spent on clinical research or health services research."</i> <i>Dr. Levine</i> moved to accept. <i>Mr. Tombros</i> seconded. No discussion. No opposition or abstentions. The motion passed unanimously.</li> </ul>
4	<p>Peer and Performance Review vendor –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A Request for Proposals (RFP) was posted on the Department of General Services website on May 17, 2019.</li> <li>• A single application was received in response to the RFP.</li> <li>• Oak Ridge Associated Universities (ORAU) signed the contract in September 2019 and began work under the new contract on October 1, 2019.</li> <li>• Much discussion occurred about the process to secure a vendor for peer review. Executive Deputy Secretary Boateng Sarah also explained contract process.</li> <li>• The discussion identified the focus issue of the quality of the peer review provided by this vendor. The members desire to be assured that the most knowledgeable, informed and active thinkers available were provided as peer reviewers.</li> <li>• Motion identified: The Committee expresses dissatisfaction with, at the result of the competitive process that resulted in one vendor to which the Committee had had significant concern about in the past that the Department move forward with signing a contract with that vendor prior to the involvement of the HRAC Committee. <i>Dr. O'Donnell</i> so moved. <i>Dr. Art Levine</i> provided a second. Executive Deputy Secretary Boateng abstained due to being part of the Department that the Committee expressed concern. <i>Dr. Masucci</i> identified a conflict of interest that prevented her from voting on the issue.</li> </ul>

5	<p>Non-formula Priority State Fiscal Year 2021-2022 planning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Deadline for public comment discussion. Recommendation if there is going to be an extension to the deadline, it be publicly posted. Motion to accept public commentary for the 2021-2022 priority. Dr. Masucci motioned. Dr. Levine provided a second. Discussion included the issue of the presentations becoming a “pitch” about the capabilities around the state and how to address the need of the Committee members for working concepts to lead to the non-formula priority. No opposition or abstentions. The motion passed unanimously.</li> <li>• The Committee will meet to discuss the process of submitting public commentary.</li> </ul>
6	<p>Other areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Executive Deputy Secretary Boateng provided an update on who can apply for non-formula funding with the Department’s definition of a “person” following the same manner of the Pennsylvania Statutory Construction Act, which states: <i>A Person . . . Includes a corporation, partnership, limited liability company, business trust, other association, government entity (other than the Commonwealth), estate, trust, foundation or natural person.</i> She added that a corporation may include both a for-profit and non-profit corporation.</li> <li>• Struggles were identified with the non-formula technical process. Deputy Secretary Patel commented that the HRO will work to address these struggles moving forward as new RFA’s are issued and reviewed.</li> <li>• Further discussion on the impact of the Spinal Cord Injury Research non-formula and the peer review vendor contract led to a motion: Dr. O’Donnell moved that the HRAC be advised in a timely fashion on any matter that the agency and the board members conduct business of the board and to act in the best interest of the citizens of the Commonwealth. Dr. Levine provided a second. No opposition or abstentions. The motion passed unanimously.</li> <li>• Executive Deputy Secretary Boateng shared successes of the CURE program from the Performance Based Budget for 2020. <b><i>During its existence, the CURE Program has provided \$1 billion in grant funding. Over the past five years, grant projects were associated with three new patents, two licenses for new products and 277 publications that expand current research and advance scientific knowledge on health-related topics. These results build on more than 2,100 publications, 35 patents and 14 licenses for new products generated by the program between 2001 and 2014.</i></b></li> <li>• Several requests were made: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ keep HRAC informed of SCRAC outcomes,</li> <li>○ provide HRAC the fully executed ORAU contract</li> <li>○ share the performance-based budget report referencing the CURE program</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
7	<p>Executive Deputy Secretary Boateng expressed appreciation for the Committee’s work. The next meeting will be scheduled. Executive Deputy Secretary Boateng made a motion to adjourn: Senator Vance seconded. No discussion. No opposition or abstentions. The motion passed unanimously. Meeting was adjourned.</p>