

Spinal Cord Research Advisory Committee

Meeting Logistics

Item	Description
Date	Thursday, April 15, 2021
Time	9:30 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.
Location	Call-in only Public call-in for listen only
Purpose/Focus	Spinal Cord Research Advisory Committee meeting – public
Notetaker	Health Research Office Staff Sargents stenographer
Call-in and Skype	Microsoft Teams meeting Join on your computer or mobile app Click here to join the meeting Or call in (audio only) +1 267-332-8737 Phone Conference ID: 967 130 786#

Attendees

SCRAC Members:

In Attendance:

- Jacob G. Chalfin, “Jake,” Chair
- Franklin Caldera, D.O., M.B.A. Chief Medical Officer at the University of Pennsylvania Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation.
- Rory A. Cooper, Ph.D., veteran with a spinal cord injury, Founding Director of the Human Engineering Research Laboratories, VA Pittsburgh Healthcare System, Pittsburgh PA; FISA/PVA Distinguished Professor of the Department of Rehabilitation Science and Technology and Associate Dean for Inclusion, School of Health and Rehabilitation Sciences, University of Pittsburgh
- Itzhak Fischer, Ph.D, Professor and Chair of the Department of Neurobiology and Anatomy at Drexel University College of Medicine and co-director of the Spinal Cord Center
- Michael Boninger, MD, Professor and UPMC Endowed Vice Chair for Research in the Department of Physical Medicine & Rehabilitation at the University of Pittsburgh, School of Medicine
- Elizabeth Tyler-Kabara, MD, neurosurgeon, Children’s Hospital of Pittsburgh

Not In Attendance:

- Benjamin Abramoff, MD, MS, Director of Spinal Cord Injury Services at the Penn Institute for Rehabilitation Medicine and Assistant Professor of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation at the University of Pennsylvania.
- Alex Charlton, father of daughter with spinal cord injury
- Joel Winer, MD, neurosurgeon, Wellspan Health, York, PA

Department of Health Staff Present:

- Christopher Albright, Administration Officer, Health Research Office
- Penny E. Harris, M.Ed., CAC, LPC, Director, Health Research Office
- Tirzah McClinton, Project Officer, Health Research Office
- Meghna Patel, MHA, Deputy Secretary for Health Innovation

- Pamela Brown, Management Technician, Health Research Office
- Emily Roussel, Executive Advisor to Deputy Secretary Meghna Patel

Not In Attendance:

- Meaghan Abbott, Director of Intergovernmental Affairs
- Deputy Secretary for Health

Others In Attendance:

- Stephanie Sherwood, ORAU
- Justin Townsend, ORAU

Agenda

ID	Description	Owner	Time
1	Welcome, Introductions and Agenda Review	Jacob Chalfin, Chair	9:30 am – 9:40 am
2	Review and approval of January 21, 2021 minutes	Jacob Chalfin, Chair	9:40 am – 9:45 am
3	Update on 2020-2021 Applications Status and Learnings	Jacob Chalfin, Chair	9:45 am – 9:55 am
4	a) Review of SCRAC Applications Procedures b) Spinal Cord Injury Research Priorities for 2021-2022 c) Tiered Approach for 2021-2022	Jacob Chalfin, Chair and DOH staff	9:55 am – 10:40 am
5	Open Discussion	All attendees	10:40 am – 10:55 am
6	Closing and Next Steps	Jacob Chalfin, Chair	10:55 - 11:00 am

Discussion

ID	Discussion
1	<p><i>Jacob Chalfin</i>, Chair, introduced himself. Committee members, DOH staff and members of the public introduced themselves. <i>Jacob Chalfin</i> reviewed the agenda.</p>
2	<p><i>Dr. Tyler-Kabara</i> moved to accept the meeting minutes of January 21, 2021. <i>Dr. Caldera</i> second. No discussion. No opposition or abstentions. The motion passed unanimously.</p>
3	<p>Update on 2020-2021 Applications Status and Learnings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 9 LOIs were submitted with one for Tier 1 and eight for Tier 2. 6 followed up with the submission of an application with one for Tier 1 and five for Tier 2. • The applications were submitted to the vendor, peer reviewed and ranked. • The SCRAC and DOH Final Review Committee identified funding for all 6 applications with two funded for Tier 1 and four funded for Tier 2. • Currently, the applications are going through the DOH approval process with Procurement and Legal areas. • When the awards are ready to be announced by the DOH, the recipients will be shared with the SCRAC. • The Health Research Office did reach out to the 3 who did not follow through to find out the reason for not applying. The response most significant was the lack of time. The HRO is planning to extend the period for submissions during the next application cycle. • The DOH is exploring options to promote awareness of this funding opportunity. • <i>Dr. Fischer</i> suggested that the SCRAC having more time to advertise the RFA to other institutions would be beneficial, as this might yield more clinical applications. • <i>Penny Harris</i> agreed to send the e-Marketplace link to the members when the RFA is posted.
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review of SCRAC Applications Procedures • The Committee was provided with the following documents to facilitate this discussion: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. <i>Appendix D Research Topic Guidance & Priorities.v2021-01-21</i> b. <i>Appendix E_SCRAC Applications Procedural Overview.v2020-7-16</i> c. <i>Appendix F_RFA Tiered approach_1st cycle.2020-2021.v2020-07-16</i> d. <i>Appendix F.2 RFA & Tiered approach_2nd cycle.2021-2022.v2020-10-14</i> e. <i>1st Cycle Procedures for DOH&SCRAC Review Committee for 2020NF RFA67-115 SCRAC.v2021-01-21</i> • The Committee discussed the 2020 application process and whether any recommendations would be made to change the documents or the process for future cycles. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. <i>Jacob Chalfin</i> expressed that he was pleased with the overall process, in that it was simple and quick. He attributed this to the peer reviewers doing the heavy lifting for the SCRAC. He informed the members of the change in funding amount for one application (one of the grants went from Tier 2 to Tier 1). <i>Mr. Chalfin</i> also expressed gratitude for those who participated on March 4 and added that this was the first time he had participated in the peer review ranking of applications. He believed the

applications were solid and quality. *Mr. Chalfin* stated that he did not believe that there was a need to make any additional changes to the process.

- b. *Dr. Fischer* reported that the study selection was exceptionally good and detailed. For the future, he would like to see SCRAC have more applications to review in line with the committee mission.
- c. *Dr. Abramoff* agreed with *Mr. Chalfin's* comments. He also expressed that he was pleased that there was enough money to fund all of the studies for this round.

- The 1st Cycle Procedures for DOH&SCRAC Review Committee for 2020NF RFA67-115 SCRAC.v2021-01-21 document was previously approved and used as the procedures for the 2020-2021 cycle.
- The Committee discussed changes to the language in “Procedures for DOH&SCRAC Review Committee”. The changes would appear as follows: Pharmacologic, biologic, medical device, brain stimulus, and novel therapeutic rehabilitative approaches and techniques.
- *Dr. Fischer* moved to accept the change in the language to the “Procedures for DOH&SCRAC Review Committee”. *Dr. Abramoff* second. No discussion. No opposition or abstentions. The motion passed unanimously.

b) Spinal Cord Injury Research Priorities for 2021-2022

- The SCRAC approved the *Appendix D Research Topic Guidance & Priorities.v2021-01-21*.
- The research priorities are:
 - a. Pharmacologic, biologic, medical device, brain stimulus, and rehabilitative approaches and techniques. [*Jacob Chalfin* made note to ensure that this language will be consistent with the changes that were previously approved in Section a)].
 - b. Preference will be given to those projects and techniques that seek to change the nature and course of the injury.
 - c. To ensure funded research addresses the gap in translation of discovery to human study and proposal, further preference will be given to research that is strategically translational or translatable relative to aims and outcomes.
 - d. Finally, further preference will be given to research strategies that represent either potential or existing collaboration with industry, whether in the development and trial of biologics, pharmacologics, device, or novel therapeutic rehabilitative treatments in combination with these developments
- This form will be used as the basis for the Request for Application. It identifies the priorities and guidance for applicants.
- *Dr. Fischer* moved to accept changes to the “*Topic Guidance & Priorities*” document. *Dr. Abramoff* second. No discussion. No opposition or abstentions. The motion passed unanimously.

c) Tiered Approach for 2021-2022

- The members approved the Tiered approach with the fund amounts for each Tier identified. The Committee’s decision for the 2021-2022 RFA is provided as *Appendix F.2 RFA Tiered approach 2nd cycle.2021-2022.v2020-10-14*. The amounts were based on \$1M in funds.
- With the 2020 applications reviewed, there is potential for \$2M in funds to be available for the 2nd cycle SFY 2021-2022.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The previous cycle used <i>Appendix F_RFA Tiered approach_1st cycle.2020-2021.v2020-07-16</i> which included \$2M in funds. • <i>Dr. Fischer</i> moved to accept a Tiered Approach as identified in “<i>Appendix F</i>”, for the 2nd cycle. <i>Dr. Cooper</i> second. No discussion. No opposition or abstentions. The motion passed unanimously.
5	<p>Open Discussion</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The next public meeting is Thursday, July 15, 2021 from 9:30 a.m. to 11 a.m. • There were no additional questions or concerns.
6	<p>Closing and Next Steps</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Jacob Chalfin</i> expressed appreciation for the committee members guidance, ideas and input on determining research priorities to improve the health of Pennsylvanians. • <i>Dr. Fischer</i> made a motion to adjourn. <i>Dr. Abramoff</i> second. Meeting concluded at 10:14 am.