

September 27, 2016
3:00 PM to 5:00 PM



Conference call # (888) 670-3525
Conference code 5311418626

Biomedical Research Advisory Council Meeting Minutes

Board Members Present:

Daniel Armstrong (Chair)
John Wingard
Abubakr A. Bajwa
David A. Decker
Stephen J. Gardell
Richard Nowakowski
Allison Eng-Perez
Barbara Centeno

Board Members not in Attendance:

Charles Evans Wood

Department of Health Staff:

- Shannon Hughes, Division Director, Community Health Promotion
- Bonnie Gaughan-Bailey, MPA, ASQ-CQIA, Administrator, Biomedical Research Section
- Teresa Mathew, MSW, MPA, Advisory Board Liaison, Biomedical Research Section
- Sylvester Thompson, Online System Technical Specialist

A quorum was present. The meeting was called to order at 3:05 p.m. Board members received all pertinent meeting materials. Board members participated via conference call and could actively and equally participate in the discussion.

I. Introduction and Meeting Overview

Dr. Armstrong explained that the purpose of the conference call was for the Biomedical Research Advisory Council to have a preliminary discussion of funding mechanisms and priority areas for a funding opportunity in response to the Governor's press release allocating a sum of \$25 million to support research related to Zika. In particular, this research shall expedite the development of a Zika vaccine, encourage discovery of innovative Zika testing methods, and document the long-term effects of infection among infants, children, and adults. Grants may be funded for a period of up to three years.

II. Discussion of Research Priorities and Funding Mechanisms for Zika Funding Opportunity Announcement (FOA)

The following Mechanisms of Support and Research Priority areas were discussed by BRAC members.

Mechanisms of Support- Funding considerations will be given to investigators who show collaboration with other Florida institutions (universities, teaching hospitals, colleges, VA), research centers, biotech and private industry. Emphasis should be on short-term deliverables and advancements. This emphasis will be included in FOA and peer review evaluation tool.

Dynamic funding changes could be distributed based on progress. This would be accomplished through multiple hypotheses, and then based on progress, a researcher could focus on the most promising hypothesis. Develop funding opportunity that is expedient for advancing public health. Incentivize collaborations with laboratories.

1. Bridge- for quick start up. Modify for starting project leading to NIH funding.
2. Rapid Pilot-
 - a. Mosquito abatement
 - b. Screening
 - c. Diagnostics
 - d. Serum studies
 - e. Epidemiology- follow Zika infected patients
3. Dynamic Change Team Science- interdisciplinary, multi-institutional (needs more definition)
4. Investigator Initiated, in line with NIH RO1 grants- supports a discrete, specified, circumscribed project to be performed by the named investigator(s) in an area representing the investigator's specific interest and competencies.
5. Discovery Science- to include epidemiology, short-term observational study of incidence and parameters of effects, or Phase 1 drug discovery components. (not agreed to on but still open for discussion)

Research Priority Areas

Innovative Diagnostic Testing-

- Predictive- fetal tissue or system involvement
- Serologic
- Point of service testing
- Model similar to new born screening
- Genetic screening
- Screening and treatment, what are barriers and opportunities. Ex: longitudinal studies with children who do not develop microcephaly but may have other long-term disabilities.
- Detection

Vaccine Development- technology companies are involved but innovative ideas may not be associated with biotech firm.

- Use of live virus
- Synthetic
- Genetic manipulation of virus
- DNA vaccines

Treatment- Effects of Zika through longitudinal, observational studies and discovery science-

- Long-term Impact of ZIKA- Laboratory based to cellular discoveries- encourage full range of applications. Animal and tissue culture
 - Hearing, vision, neurodevelopment, Neurocognitive in children
 - Effect on central nervous system, neuromuscular diseases,
 - Impact of cognitive effects in adults
 - Peripheral nervous system
 - Organ damage
 - Encourage investigation for effects organ damage
 - Drug discovery, drug pilot trials
 - Rapid clinical trial
 - Laboratory based to cellular discoveries- encourage full range of applications. Animal and tissue culture
- Epidemiologic studies

- Mechanisms of long-term effects, to clear reservoirs of virus, long-term impacts even if child is not positive with Zika. Endothelial response, a long-term problem. Opportunities to draw from other viruses, such as HIV, to make advancements in Zika.
- Rapid pilot observation studies.

Dr. Armstrong called for a vote on the above Research Priorities and Funding Mechanisms. Dr. Nowakowski made the motion. Dr. Bajwa seconded the motion. Total votes for approval: (Total members voting: 8) Affirmative: 8, Negative: 0, Recusal: 0.

III. Update on Zika Research Grant Initiative Timeline

Bonnie Gaughan-Bailey presented an update on the amount of time that will be allocated for applicants to submit the Letter of Intent and the main grant application. The Department's peer review vendor requires four weeks for the peer review process. It will take approximately 3 weeks to finalize the Funding Opportunity Announcement. Applicants would be allowed three weeks to submit the Letter of Intent, and another three to four weeks to submit the main grant application.

The BRAC provided feedback regarding the amount of time allowed for the Letter of Intent and main grant application.

A final schedule of important dates will be available in the Funding Opportunity Announcement.

III. Public Comment

Members of the public had the opportunity to provide feedback regarding the proposed research priority areas and funding mechanisms. The following topics were discussed:

- Risks of living in zones being sprayed with the pesticide used for mosquito control.
- Development of antibodies that could be used in pregnant women.
- Funding research that has a high likelihood of gaining federal funding.
- Facilitating rapid implementation of existing treatments.
- Concern that a vaccine may cause enhancement and worsening of symptoms.
- The challenges of gaining access to clinical samples.

IV. Election of Vice-Chair

Dr. Nowakowski volunteered for the position of Vice Chair. Dr. Gardell seconded the motion. Total votes for approval: (Total members voting: 8) Affirmative: 8, Negative: 0, Recusal: 0.

Dr. Nowakowski will chair BRAC meetings in Dr. Armstrong's absence.

The meeting concluded at 4:30 p.m.