



Department of Health Wadsworth Center

SPINAL CORD INJURY RESEARCH BOARD

Regular Business Meeting

November 15, 2024

10:00 am to 3:00 pm

ADOPTED

Location

NYS DOH, Wadsworth Center, Biggs Laboratory, Sturman Conference Room, Empire State Plaza, Albany, NY

NYS DOH, Metropolitan Area Regional Office, Conference Room 4A-B, 90 Church Street, New York, NY

School of Medicine and Biomedical Sciences, Conference Room 3254, Jacobs, 955 Main Street, Buffalo, NY

SCIRB Members Present

Adam B. Stein, MD, Chair
April B. Coughlin, PhD
Jessica K. Daigle, MA, OTR/L
Keith Gurgui
Lorne Mendell, PhD
Avinash Mohan, MD
Ramin Rak, MD, FAANS
Rachel Santiago, MD
Fraser J. Sim, PhD
Lauren A. Varriale, MS, OTR/L

NYS DOH Staff Present

Michele Kilmartin, Substituting
Executive Secretary

Farrah M. O'Brien
David Googins
Jim Magenis

Members of the Public

N/A

CALL TO ORDER, WELCOME MEMBERS & OPENING REMARKS [10:00]

The meeting was called to order at 10:00am with a welcome by Chair, Adam B. Stein, M.D.

Board Membership Updates

Dr. Stein said a few words in honor of Bernice Grafstein, former SCIRB member. Dr. Mendell thoughtfully recognized Bernice for her work and dedication to SCIRB and the spinal cord injury community.

Dr. Stein welcomed the newest SCIRB member, Dr. Ramin Rak, who introduced himself to the Board. Board members and DOH staff introduced themselves.

Dr. Stein advised that there were three (3) vacant seats on the SCIRB, with one (1) of those seats to be filled by Governor Kathy Hochul and two (2) to be filled by Speaker of the Assembly Carl Heastie.

Board Member Recruitment

Dr. Stein noted that a candidate to fill the governor's vacancy has been moved forward.

Dr. Stein said that it is extremely important to fill the remaining vacancies with new experts and advocates as quickly as possible so the SCIRB can continue its mission to find a cure for spinal cord injuries and approve applications of merit for awards.

Dr. Stein asked that current SCIRB members forward any recommendations of potential SCIRB members to Department of Health staff, or to the legislative leadership that has vacancies to fill.

Consideration of March 22, 2024 Meeting Minutes

Dr. Stein asked the SCIRB to consider Exhibit 1, the minutes from the March 22, 2024 meeting.

Dr. Stein reminded the Board that Dr. Rak must abstain from voting on the previous minutes as he was not a member at the time of the meeting.

ACTION

Dr. Mendell made a motion to approve the minutes as presented. Ms. Varriale seconded. A roll call vote was taken, and the minutes were approved (9-0).

Public Comment

No members of the public provided a written statement and there was no public comment.

ACTION

Ms. Varriale moved to adjourn into Executive Session for the purpose of discussing the applications received in response to SCIRB RFAs and other discussions. Dr. Mohan seconded. A roll call vote was taken, and the motion was unanimously approved (10-0).

After discussion, the SCIRB reconvened in Public Session.

SCIRB vote on Predoctoral and Postdoctoral Fellowships in Spinal Cord Injury Research (Round 6) Application

In summary, the SCIRB recommended not to forward the application for funding using the peer review results as the basis for the decision.

ACTION

A vote was held on the sole Fellowship application under consideration submitted by Treena Arinzeh, Ph.D. of Columbia University. A roll call vote was taken, and the motion was denied (0-10).

SCIRB vote on Projects to Accelerate Research Translation (PART) and Innovative, Developmental or Exploratory Activities (IDEA) in Spinal Cord Injury (Round 7) Applications

In summary, the SCIRB recommended to forward nine (9) applications for funding using the peer review results as the basis for the decision.

ACTION

A vote was held on the IDEA application submitted by Hang Jin Jo, Ph.D. of the State University of New York at Buffalo. A roll call vote was taken, and the motion was approved (9-0) as Dr. Sim abstained from voting.

ACTION

A motion to vote on the IDEA application submitted by Ona Bloom, Ph.D. of the Feinstein Institutes for Medical Research was offered by Dr. Mendell. It was seconded by Dr. Rak. A vote was held on the IDEA application submitted by. A roll call vote was taken, and the motion was approved (7-0-3) as Dr. Stein, Ms. Varriale and Ms. Daigle abstained from voting.

ACTION

A motion to vote on the PART application submitted by Janel Paluh, Ph.D. of the State University of New York at Albany was offered by Dr. Rak. It was seconded by Ms. Varriale. A roll call vote was taken, and the motion was approved (10-0).

ACTION

A motion to vote on the PART application submitted by John Martin, Ph.D. of the City College of New York was offered by Dr. Rak. It was seconded by Ms. Daigle. A roll call vote was taken, and the motion was approved (10-0).

ACTION

A motion to vote on the PART application submitted by Leif A. Havton, M.D., Ph.D. of the Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai was offered by Ms. Daigle. It was seconded by Ms. Varriale. A roll call vote was taken, and the motion was approved (9-0-1) as Dr. Rak abstained from voting.

ACTION

A motion to vote on the IDEA application submitted by Carlos Toro, Ph.D. of the Bronx Veterans Medical Research Foundation was offered by Dr. Mendell. It was seconded by Dr. Mohan. A roll call vote was taken, and the motion was approved (10-0).

ACTION

A motion to vote on the PART application submitted by Maria Knikou, P.T., M.B.A., Ph.D. of the Research Foundation for CUNY Staten Island was offered by Dr. Rak. It was seconded by Dr. Mendell. A roll call vote was taken, and the motion was approved (10-0).

ACTION

A motion to vote on the IDEA application submitted by Hongyan Zou, M.D., Ph.D. of the Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai was offered by Ms. Daigle. It was seconded by Ms. Varriale. A roll call vote was taken, and the motion was approved (9-0-1) as Dr. Rak abstained from voting.

ACTION

A motion to vote on the IDEA application submitted by Ame Teale, Ph.D. of the Sunnyview Hospital and Rehabilitation Center was offered by Dr. Rak. It was seconded by Ms. Daigle. A roll call vote was taken, and the motion was approved (9-0-1) as Dr. Santiago abstained from voting.

Future RFA: Individual Predoctoral and Postdoctoral Fellowships in Spinal Cord Injury Research (Round 7)

ACTION

Dr. Rak made a motion to approve a Fellowships (Round 7) RFA for release in 2025 with \$1.5 million available. Ms. Daigle seconded. A roll call vote was taken, and the motion was unanimously approved (10-0).

Future RFA: Projects to Accelerate Research Translation (PART) and Innovative, Developmental or Exploratory Activities in Spinal Cord Injury (Round 8)

ACTION

Dr. Mohan made a motion to approve a PART & IDEA (Round 8) RFA for release in 2024 with approximately \$5 million available. Ms. Varriale seconded. A roll call vote was taken, and the motion was unanimously approved (10-0).

DOH PROGRAM UPDATE

Mr. Magenis provided an update on the status of other program activities and previously awarded contracts:

- The DOH Peer Review contract with the American Institute for Biological Sciences (AIBS) continues and ends in December 2024, an extension of up to 17 months will be requested. After this time bids will be accepted for a new peer review contract.
- One (1) PART and seven (7) of the eight (8) IDEA (Round 4) contracts began in November 2021. These multi-year contracts ended in October 2023 (IDEA) and October 2024 (PART). One (1) of the eight (8) IDEA is seeking a no-cost-time-extension.
- Four (4) PART and five (5) of the nine (9) IDEA (Round 5) contracts began in October 2022. These multi-year contracts ended in September 2024 (IDEA) or will end in September 2025 (PART).
- Four (4) PART and four (4) IDEA (Round 6) contracts began in October 2023. These multi-year contracts will end in September 2025 (IDEA) or September 2026 (PART).
- Two (2) awards from Translational Research Projects (Round 4) began October 2022 and will end in September 2027.
- Eight (8) awards from Predoctoral and Postdoctoral Fellowships (Round 5) began September 2023 and will end in August 2025.
- Thirteen (13) awards from Institutional Support (Round 7) began July 2023 and will end in June 2028.

Future Meeting & Adjournment

At its next meeting, **April 11, 2025**, the SCIRB will consider applications for the Transitional (Round 6) RFA. Dr. Stein thanked members of the SCIRB and DOH staff for attending. The business meeting was adjourned at 11:35 am.



Department of Health

Wadsworth Center

Predocctoral and Postdoctoral Fellowships (Fellowships)
in Spinal Cord Injury Research (Round 6)
No awards were recommended

Organizations	Award Mechanism	Project Title	Fellow and PI	Approved Budget	Votes (Y-N)
Columbia University in the City of New York	Predocctoral	Electroactive biomaterial stimulation for axon growth after spinal cord injury	Treena L. Arinzeh, Ph.D. & Sumayia SJ Chowdhury, Pre-Doctoral Fellow	n/a	0-10

PART and IDEA (Round 7)

\$5.47 million in the form of four (4) PART and five (5) IDEA awards were recommended.

Projects are three (3) years for PART awards and two (2) years for IDEA awards.

Organization	Funding Mechanism / Research Category	Project Title	PI & Co-PI(s)	Recommended Funding	Votes (Y-N-R)
The State University of New York at Buffalo	IDEA / Rehabilitation	Neuromodulation to Improve Grasping Function After Spinal Cord Injury	Hang Jin Jo, Ph.D.	\$357,582	9-0-1
The Feinstein Institutes for Medical Research Subcontract: Bronx VA	IDEA / Cellular Regeneration	Tolerability and preliminary efficacy of galantamine to treat metabolic syndrome in people with chronic spinal cord injury (SCI)	Ona Bloom, Ph.D. Subcontract PIs: Jill Wecht, EdD Chris Ciringilioro, EdD	\$340,577	7-0-3
The State University of New York at Albany Subcontract: The Methodist Hospital Research Institute	PART / Cellular Regeneration	Molecular and Functional Outcomes of Combined Epidural Spinal Stimulation and Neuron Interneuron Excitatory Ribbons	PI: Janet L. Paluh, Ph.D. Subcontract: PI: Philip J. Horner, Ph.D.	\$905,044	10-0-0
The City College of New York	PART / Cellular Regeneration	Combined biomaterial scaffold - neuromodulation strategy for recovering function in preclinical model of rodent SCI	John Martin, Ph.D.	\$990,000	10-0-0
Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai Subcontract: Bronx VA	PART / Rehabilitation	AI-Guided Predictions of Blood Pressure Dysregulation using Perfusion Index as a Novel Biomarker in Persons with Spinal Cord Injury	Leif A. Havton, M.D., Ph.D. Subcontract PI: John Handrakis, PT, DPT, Ed.D.	\$926,228	9-0-1
Bronx Veterans Medical Research Foundation Subcontract: 1. Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute	IDEA / Cellular Regeneration	Parenterally administered formulations of boldine to preserve function after SCI	Carlos A. Toro, Ph.D. Subcontract PIs:1. Ed Palermo, PhD; Ryan Gilbert,	\$345,000	10-0-0

2. University of Minnesota			PhD2. Vadim Gurvich, PhD, MBA; Henry Wong, PhD		
Organization	Funding Mechanism / Research Category	Project Title	PI & Co-PI(s)	Recommended Funding	Votes (Y-N-R)
The Research Foundation for CUNY Staten Island Subcontract: w/ Rosalie Hannigan	PART / Rehabilitation	Cervical and Lumbosacral Transspinal Stimulation to Reconnect the Injured Human Spinal Cord	Maria Knikou, P.T., M.B.A., Ph.D.	\$922,983	10-0-0
Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai	IDEA / Cellular Regeneration	Transcriptional regulator of axon regeneration in SCI	Hongyan "Jenny" Zou, M.D., Ph.D.	\$360,000	9-0-1
Sunnyview Hospital and Rehabilitation Center Subcontracts: 1. Albany Research Institute 2. Barrett Medical	IDEA / Rehabilitation	Effectiveness of Sensorimotor Versus Motor-Only Training in Restoring Upper Limb Sensory and Motor Function for Patients with Spinal Cord Injury: A Comparative Study	Amy E. Teale, Ph.D. Subcontract PI: 1. Nicholas J. Hill, D.Phil.	\$319,861	9-0-1