

# SPINAL CORD INJURY RESEARCH BOARD MEETING

## SPINAL CORD INJURY RESEARCH BOARD

Regular Business Meeting

September 20, 2023

11:00 am to 12:50 pm

**ADOPTED**

### Location

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

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

9 Corwin Place, Lake Katrine NY955 Main Street, Buffalo, NY

### **SCIRB Members Present**

April B. Coughlin, Ph.D.

Jessica Daigle, MA, OTR/L

Bernice Grafstein, Ph.D., D.Sc.(hon.)

Keith Gurgui

Lorne Mendell, Ph.D.

Rachel Santiago, M.D.

Fraser J. Sim, Ph.D.

Adam B. Stein, M.D., Chair

Lauren A. Varriale, M.S., OTR/L

### **NYS DOH Staff Present**

Alana Buscher, Executive Secretary

David Googins

James Magenis

Farrah M. O'Brien

Alexa Nagy

### **Members of the Public**

n/a

## **CALL TO ORDER, WELCOME MEMBERS & OPENING REMARKS**

The meeting was called to order at 11:10 am. with a welcome by Chair, Adam B. Stein, M.D. This was followed by the introduction of the attendees.

### **Consideration of May 15, 2023 Meeting Minutes**

Dr. Stein asked the SCIRB to consider Exhibit 1, the minutes from the May 25, 2023, meeting.

### **ACTION**

Dr. Mendell made a motion to approve the minutes as presented with edits. Dr. Grafstein seconded. A roll call vote was taken, and the motion carried unanimously (9-0).

## **RESOLUTION TO MODIFY SCIRB BYLAWS**

A motion has been brought forward to amend the SCIRB Bylaws to allow members with physical disabilities to attend meetings virtually and still count towards quorum. This change would accommodate recent changes to the state's Open Meetings Law. Questions were raised regarding:

- Definition of disability
- Timeframe of exemption
- Activation of exemption

It was determined that EGA staff would bring answers to the questions to the following board meeting to clarify before the vote to amend the Bylaws took place, and per Open Meetings Law, the proposed change to the Bylaws would be shared with SCIRB in advance of the meeting.

### **ACTION**

Dr. Grafstein made a motion to approve the Resolution as presented and discussed. Ms. Daigle seconded. A roll call vote was taken, and the motion carried unanimously (9-0).

### **PUBLIC COMMENT**

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

### **PROGRAM UPDATE**

Mr. Googins raised three discussion points.

1. The idea of having set dates for meetings. *The Board was in favor of the proposal and will respond to an email suggesting ongoing dates for the meeting. (i.e., Third Wednesday or March and October.)*
2. The updates to the SCIRB website due to Executive Law 203-b. This law requires boards to establish websites with some required membership information. An example of the current site and the web address were shared with the board as Exhibit 3.
3. Question of how to handle previous reviews of resubmitted applications; could Peer Reviewers see the previous critiques and not just the response in the revised applications. Also, should PART/IDEA have the option of resubmitting. *Dr. Sim had not realized this was not already happening. Dr. Mendell commented that they normally follow NIH guidelines and reviewers there would see a previous critique. Ms. Daigle raised the point that seeing a previous critique could potentially bias a reviewer in either direction with an application to be reviewed. It was agreed that as it would not be an undue administrative burden to allow access to previous critiques and that an applicant was not required to state it was a resubmission, that Peer Review members should have access to previous critiques for resubmission. It was also agreed that PART/IDEA applications would also be granted the opportunity to denote themselves as resubmissions.*

## **Membership**

Dr. Stein related four (4) vacant SCIRB seats remain out of a total of thirteen (13), one (1) to be filled by Governor Kathy Hochul, two (2) by Speaker of the Assembly, Carl Heastie, and one (1) by the Temporary President of the Senate, Andrea Stewart-Cousins.

He noted that it is extremely important to fill these 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 award. Ms. O'Brien stated that we had one nominee put forward from Governor, but that they had declined due to the inability to apply for funding from the program. Members were asked to see who they might know to be good candidates. It was suggested that they confirm interest before forwarding names to EGA.

## **Symposium**

Dr. Stein raised the point that the Board had expressed an interest in hosting another Symposium. He mentioned that the costs would need to be kept under \$50,000 or the process would need to go out to bid. The Board then discussed available funding for the event. NYS has available \$16,000 and that the Board would likely need to contribute the balance. EGA would look to see if there was the possibility of other funding from the State.

Members were asked to show interest in forming a subcommittee to investigate the feasibility of holding a Symposium. Drs. Stein and Mendell along with Ms. Coughlin, Ms. Varriale, and Ms. Daigle offered to be on it with Mr. Googins as the DOH liaison.

## **New suggestions or changes to current RFA offerings**

Dr. Stein asked the Board if they were interested in forming a subcommittee to discuss new RFA opportunities.

Dr. Sim and Mr. Gurgui discussed the possibility of RFAs to bring in PIs that had not yet been funded by SCIRB. Dr. Sim, Mr. Gurgui, and Ms. Santiago offered to be on the subcommittee with Mr. Googins as the DOH liaison.

## **Sharing of Published Articles**

Ms. O'Brien reminded the Board that at the May 25, 2023 meeting Mr. Gurgui expressed an interest in how to have the articles published by SCIRB contract recipients more accessible to the Board and the Public at large. She referred to Exhibit 4 that showed language from the SCIRB contracts regarding the availability of published articles. This language requires "All publications reporting research supported by SCIRB funds published in peer reviewed journals must be deposited in the National Institutes of Health National Library of Medicine's PubMed Central (PMC). The SCIRB encourages investigators to sign copyright agreements that specifically allow the published manuscript to be deposited for public posting on PMC. As investigators are encouraged to publish SCIRB funded research findings as "open-access" publications, contract funds may be used to cover costs required for such "open access" publication." It was further noted that to make articles more readily available, EGA staff will take steps to ensure publications are listed on PubMed and to then

link those publications under the "External Publications" heading. EGA staff will also be adding a slide to our Applicant Conference PowerPoint to remind those who apply for funding that they are required to utilize PubMed.

**Future Meeting & Adjournment**

At its next meeting in spring 2024, the SCIRB anticipates the consideration of the latest Translational applications, and an amendment to the Bylaws to allow for disabled members to attend the meeting virtually and still count towards quorum. The business meeting was adjourned at 12:50 pm.