

**73rd Meeting of the National Cancer Institute (NCI)
NCI Council of Research Advocates (NCRA)
National Institutes of Health (NIH)**

**Thursday, March 30, 2017
11:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.**

Webinar

Members Present

Mr. David Arons, Chair
Dr. Gregory Aune
Ms. Mary Ann Battles
Dr. Sue Friedman
Dr. June McKoy

Ms. Kimberly Newman-McCown
Ms. Senaida Fernandez Poole
Dr. Roberto Vargas
Dr. Regina Vidaver

Speakers

Mr. David Arons, Chair, NCRA; Chief Executive Officer, National Brain Tumor Society
Ms. M. K. Holohan, Director, Office of Government and Congressional Relations, NCI
Dr. Douglas R. Lowy, Acting Director, NCI; Chief, Laboratory of Cellular Oncology, NCI
Ms. Amy Williams, Director, Office of Advocacy Relations; Executive Secretary, NCRA, NCI

Welcome, Introductions, and Opening Remarks

Mr. Arons, Ms. Williams

Ms. Williams called the meeting to order and welcomed members and guests. The NCRA last met in September 2016 and NCI looks forward to convening this group in person this summer.

Ms. Williams reviewed the agenda for the Webinar. The Webinar speakers include Dr. Doug Lowy, Acting Director of NCI, and M.K. Holohan, Director of the NCI Office of Government and Congressional Relations (OGCR). Following those presentations, the group will engage in discussion, questions and answers, and review NCRA plans for 2017.

Ms. Williams requested that NCRA members announce themselves for the call, and reviewed the mandatory conflict of interest statement.

Mr. Arons, NCRA Chair, greeted the Council members and the public and introduced Dr. Lowy.

NCI Director's Update

Dr. Lowy

Dr. Lowy thanked the NCRA members for their leadership and support. Dr. Lowy began today's presentation by discussing the Cancer Moonshot.

Dr. Lowy discussed the 21st Century Cures Act, which among other things authorizes funding for the Cancer Moonshot Blue Ribbon Panel recommendations. The funding must be appropriated each year,

with the first year's amount totaling \$300 million. The total funding authorized over seven years is \$1.8 billion.

The NCI is planning to fund several grants for FY 17. Because of the short turnaround time between receiving the funds in Cures, we have made a number of rapid funding announcements on a dedicated NCI site. Each of the RFAs posted are related to one or more of the Blue Ribbon Panel's recommendations. Dr. Lowy reminded the NCRA that the Blue Ribbon Panel's recommendations were set specifically to accelerate cancer research and span disease type.

Dr. Lowy shared his excitement and gratitude with the NCRA members about this progress, as well as his gratitude to Congress. He did explain to NCRA that the funds authorized by 21st Century Cures are critical to progress against the Blue Ribbon Panel's recommendations but do not supplant the NCI's baseline budget and other investments in cancer research.

Dr. Lowy emphasized the Blue Ribbon Panel recommendations are intentionally narrow and do not reflect fundamental work supported by other appropriations. He detailed some of this fundamental work, including supporting investigator-initiated research, basic science, workforce development, and clinical trials. Dr. Lowy informed the NCRA that the vast majority of cancer clinical trials are supported by NCI's regular appropriation.

Dr. Lowy closed by thanking the NCRA members for their support and described NCI's ability to achieve progress for patients is closely tied to the community's work.

Ms. Williams thanked Dr. Lowy and handed things over to Mr. Arons. How can we be helpful as the NCRA in helping to make sure the progress that NCI is making is well understood by policymakers as they make decisions for the future.

Ms. Williams introduced M.K. Holohan to provide a legislative update.

Legislative Update

Ms. Holohan

Ms. Holohan introduced Holly Gibbons, also with NCI's Office of Government and Congressional Relations (OGCR), who accompanied her for the presentation.

The budget process is top of mind for those of us in the research community. The President's budget proposal will be released soon and reviewed by Congress. In many years we do not see those individual spending bills pass into law.

We could see a full-year continuing resolution, an omnibus bill. There is always a possibility that there will not be an agreement for fiscal year 2017, which could lead to a government shutdown.

For fiscal year 2018 a "skinny budget" was released in March that included a cut to NIH, a reduction of about \$5.8 billion. We have started to see a lot of reaction to that from the research community. The full budget is expected in the first two weeks in May.

Ms. Holohan suggested that the NCRA watch the schedule for the House and Senate budget hearings for NIH. Congress will be discussing additional cuts with the Administration.

There will be a hearing on March 8 on the importance of biomedical research.

Wrap-Up

Mr. Arons, Ms. Williams

In closing, Ms. Williams and Mr. Arons thanked the participants for their time. The NCRA will convene again in June 2017 in Bethesda, Maryland.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 12:30 p.m.