

SPINAL CORD INJURY RESEARCH BOARD

Regular Business Meeting

April 11, 2025

11:00 am to 1:00 pm

DRAFT AND UNADOPTED

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

SCIRB Members Present

Adam B. Stein, MD, Chair
April B. Coughlin, PhD
Jessica K. Daigle, MA, OTR/L
Keith Gurgui
Shelly Hsieh, MD
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

Alana Buscher, Executive Secretary
Farrah M. O'Brien
David Googins
Jim Magenis
Christopher D'Entrone
Alexa Nagy

Members of the Public

Edmund Hollis
Evan Joiner
John Cleary
Monique Reece

CALL TO ORDER, WELCOME MEMBERS & OPENING REMARKS

The meeting was called to order at 11:00am with a welcome by Chair, Adam B. Stein, M.D.

Board Membership Updates

Dr. Stein introduced himself and welcomed the newest SCIRB member, Dr. Shelly Hsieh, who introduced herself to the Board. Board members and DOH staff introduced themselves.

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

Board Member Recruitment

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 November 15, 2024, Meeting Minutes

Dr. Stein asked the SCIRB to consider Exhibit 1, the minutes from the November 15, 2024, meeting. Dr. Stein reminded the Board that Dr. Hsieh must abstain from voting on the previous minutes as she was not a member at the time of the meeting.

ACTION

Ms. Varriale made a motion to approve the minutes as presented. Dr. Rak seconded. A roll call vote was taken, and the minutes were approved (10-0-1).

Public Comment

Dr. Stein read two (2) letters from the public and there was no other public comment.

ACTION

Dr. Sim moved to adjourn into Executive Session for the purpose of discussing the applications received in response to SCIRB RFAs and other discussions. Dr. Rak seconded. A roll call vote was taken, and the motion was unanimously approved (11-0).

After discussion, the SCIRB reconvened in Public Session.

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

In summary, the SCIRB recommended to forward three (3) applications for funding using the peer review results as the basis for the decision.

ACTION

A vote was held on the Postdoc Fellowship application under consideration submitted by Dr. Hollis of Winifred Masterson Burke Medical Research Institute. A roll call vote was taken, and the application was approved with Dr. Hsieh abstaining (10-0-1).

ACTION

A vote was held on the Postdoc Fellowship application under consideration submitted by Dr. Zou of the Icahn School of Medicine. A roll call vote was taken, and the application was approved (11-0).

ACTION

A vote was held on the Predoc Fellowship application under consideration submitted by Dr. Duenas of Syracuse University. A roll call vote was taken, and the application was approved (11-0).

ACTION

A vote was held on the Postdoc Fellowship application under consideration submitted by Dr. Sahni of Winifred Masterson Burke Medical Research Institute. A roll call vote was taken, and the application was denied with Dr. Hsieh abstaining. (0-10-1).

Penalties in Future RFA releases

ACTION

A vote was taken to increase the possible number of penalties from .1 to 1.0 allowing for multiple penalties in an application each at .1 point. A roll call vote was taken, and the measure was approved (11-0)

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, **October 10, 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 12:55 pm.