

**Florida Biomedical Research
Advisory Council (BRAC)
Meeting Minutes - DRAFT**

**August 7, 2007
3:00 p.m. – 5:30 p.m.
Conference Call**

BRAC Members Present:

Dr. Veena Antony
Dr. Richard Bookman, Chair
Dr. Randal Henderson
Dr. Myra Hurt
Dr. Daniel Morris
Dr. Sigurd Normann
Dr. Penny Ralston
Dr. Mary Lou Sole
Dr. Herbert Weissbach, Vice-Chair

BRAC Members Absent:

Dr. Nick Gravenstein
Mr. Al Latimer

**Florida Department of Health
Representatives Present:**

Ms. Mary Bernard, VP, Lytmos Group
Ms. Hope Davis, Grant Manager, Lytmos Group
Ms. Sherrie Hajek, Programs Manager, OPHR
Dr. Susan Phillips, Director, OPHR
Ms. Peggy Shults, CEO, Lytmos Group
Mr. Chuck Wells, Assistant Director, OPHR

Guests in Attendance:

Ms. Candy Holloway – American Lung
Association of Florida

Welcome and Approval of Minutes: Minutes of the May 4, 2007 BRAC meeting were presented. Dr. Weissbach moved that *the minutes be approved as submitted*. This motion was seconded and passed unanimously. Minutes of the July 24, 2007 HBCU BRAC Subcommittee meeting were presented. Dr. Ralston moved *the minutes be approved as submitted*. This motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

Public Comments: None.

OPHR Report: Mr. Wells informed the BRAC of Florida Department of Health Office of Public Health Research (OPHR) plans to reduce expenditures for the King and Bankhead-Coley programs by 4% to comply with state-mandated budget cuts. He stated that further reductions may mean cuts to existing grants, noting that the necessary reduction will not be known until after the outcome of the special session of the state legislature in mid-September. He affirmed that, if grant reductions become necessary, the strategy will be to protect the New Investigator Research Grants as much as possible, by first reducing Bridge Grant awards and then the larger team/collaborative grants. Dr. Bookman noted that multi-year grants will be able to absorb any reductions in the second or third years. A presentation on administrative expenses, originally planned for this meeting when it was to be face to face, will instead be on the September BRAC meeting agenda.

Mr. Wells formally welcomed Dr. Antony as the newest member of the BRAC.

HBCU Committee Update: Mr. Wells began the discussion on this topic by sharing the news that, in the opinion of legal counsel for the Department of Health, the proviso language in the spending bill is unconstitutional. Consequently, OPHR has been advised not to implement it. Concerning the presumed substantive issue of the proviso language—minority health, Mr. Wells introduced draft language that could amend s. 381.921 goals to allow that “Preference shall be given to research proposals that are designed to better understand or mitigate cancer-related health disparities.” In the discussion that followed, Dr. Normann recommended leaving the statute alone and Dr. Bookman requested that a conference call be arranged so that he could discuss concerns with the program’s attorney. After that, if appropriate, BRAC prefers that we proceed with the next steps recommended by the HBCU subcommittee. An update will be presented at the September BRAC meeting.

Florida Biomedical Research Programs – FY 2008-2009 Call for Grant Applications: Ms.

Shults presented a report that summarized active grants in both program areas and current grant types. She also presented data on the Small Business Technology Transfer (SBTT) Grant, previously offered through the King program, especially noting the small number of applications received. The report included feedback from grantees on the mechanism, and options for reintroducing the mechanism in the next call for applications. It was noted that the SBTT Grant was originally envisioned as seed money leading to a grantee seeking federal tech transfer support. Dr. Bookman requested that the ongoing research by DOH, along with further research on the successes of SBTT grantees, be reported at the September meeting to help understand the impact of these awards against program objectives.

Dr. Phillips asked the BRAC to consider whether there is anything the King program can do with a grant mechanism that would help make the new Florida Tobacco Prevention Program more effective, such as funding epidemiological research to guide empirical methods, or assessing the appropriateness of outreach and marketing materials for their intended audience. After discussion, BRAC members suggested that some of the \$50 million might be used for this purpose, with support from the BRAC, similar to the Special Emphasis Project recently offered under the Bankhead-Coley program. Dr. Phillips agreed to follow up with Alan Rowan, Director of the Division of Health Access and Tobacco, to explore this possibility.

Ms. Shults then presented information about a Clinical Trial Planning (R34) Grant offered by the National Institute of Allergies and Infectious Disease and other centers of the National Institutes of Health (NIH) as a possible model for a similar type of new mechanism. Lytmos was asked to further research how successful this mechanism has been for NIH. Dr. Bookman noted that in offering planning grants, one critical issue that must be addressed is how the grantee then advances to further funding through the program.

Dr. Henderson made a case for offering a mechanism that would provide infrastructure support for cancer clinical trials in the state to be offered within the Bankhead-Coley program. After considerable discussion, Dr. Henderson agreed to prepare additional information on this topic at the September meeting that will include a proposal for the design of a specific mechanism, including a term, maximum award amount, eligibility requirements, special deliverables expected from awardees, and application evaluation criteria.

Ms. Shults stated that, in order to ensure timely release of the FY 2007-2008 calls for applications for both programs, it will be necessary to finalize the grant mechanisms to be offered during the September meeting, along with any new or revised eligibility and application guidelines. Mr. Wells alerted BRAC that administrative costs must be considered when adding new mechanisms since those costs increase with more mechanisms to manage. Generally, the most cost effective avenue is fewer mechanisms, and fewer but larger grants.

Program Annual Reports: Ms. Shults referred BRAC members to a timeline illustrating the milestones leading up to publication of the 2007 Bankhead-Coley Annual Report by December 15th, and the 2007 King Annual Report before February 1, 2008. She noted the windows of time allotted for BRAC feedback regarding document drafts, and asked for BRAC volunteers to provide input during the planning stages of both reports. Drs. Sole and Weissbach agreed to help plan the Bankhead-Coley report during late August, and Drs. Bookman and Hurt offered to assist with planning the King report in early September.

Open Discussion and Closing: Mr. Wells informed the BRAC that Dr. Clyde McCoy recently informed OPHR that he is ready to hand off his chairmanship of FLCURED; since he has served as the BRAC designee on the FLCURED Council, a new BRAC designee should be selected during the September BRAC meeting. Self nominations are appropriate and an e-mail soliciting such will be sent out after the meeting.

Dr. Weissbach then made a motion that *the meeting be adjourned*. This motion was seconded and passed unanimously, and the meeting was adjourned at 5:15 p.m. EST.

Respectfully submitted on behalf of Dr. Richard Bookman, Chair

 10-2-07

Chuck Wells, Assistant Director
Office of Public Health Research