

# MEETING MINUTES

## Consortium for Medical Marijuana Clinical Outcomes Research: BOARD MEETING

Thursday, June 4<sup>th</sup>, 2020 at Noon

*Remote Connection via Zoom*

### Board Members Present:

Roger Fillingim, Chair  
Dalton Dietrich  
Martha Rosenthal  
Eric Holmes  
William Anderson  
Daniel Flynn  
Cynthia Hughes-Harris  
Max Orezzaoli

### Board Members Absent:

Timothy Gilberston

### Attendees:

Almut Winterstein, Consortium Director  
Robert Cook, Consortium Associate Director  
Yan Wang  
Juan Hincapie-Castillo  
Amie Goodin  
Sebastian Jugl  
Anna Shavers  
Jeevan Jyot  
Brianna Costales  
Sabina Nduaguba

### Opening Remarks

Dr. Roger Fillingim of the University of Florida (UF) called the meeting to order at 12:04 pm. He welcomed all Board Members and thanked everyone for being flexible and meeting via Zoom.

### Overview, Budget Status and Updates on Consortium Future

Dr. Almut Winterstein provided an update on the upcoming Consortium budget. Currently, there is not an existing approved budget for the state of Florida or the Consortium.

In March, the state and the house finalized a budget. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic and ramped response efforts needed, the budget was held before sending to Governor DeSantis for approval.

Based on the March version of the budget, the Consortium is expected to receive \$1.5 million, as in the previous year. The Governor has made remarks that state budget cuts across the board are likely, but no one currently knows what will happen to the budget as of date.

To emphasize the importance of funding the Consortium, a letter has been drafted to Governor DeSantis, Senator Bob Bradley, and Representative Ray Rodrigues.

The letter was shared with the Board Members to review yesterday, and Dr. Winterstein opened the floor for feedback. Board Members thanked Dr. Winterstein and team for drafting the letter and providing updates regarding the budget. All Board Members present voted in favor of sending the letter on their behalf to the Governor. No Board Members opposed the decision, and no Board Members abstained from voting.

Dr. Winterstein shared that the Consortium has requested permission from the Board of Governors to carry the current budget forward to the next fiscal year. The budget carryforward would allow the Consortium to maintain operations and allow funded research projects that experienced delays due to COVID-19 to continue.

Dr. Winterstein reminded the board that the purpose of today's meeting is to rank applications for funding for the new fiscal year so that grant awards can be made immediately upon budget allocations, if the budget is allocated on July 1<sup>st</sup>. Dr. Fillingim echoed support for the plan to review grant proposals.

Dr. Winterstein provided an overview of the scoring method and decision process for the grants program last fall.

#### **Discussion of Grants Program Scoring Method**

The Consortium received 20 applications for the grants program this year. These proposals were reviewed by ad-hoc out-of-state faculty reviewers with demonstrated expertise in the respective research area.

#### **Review Grant Proposals based on Reviewer Scores**

The proposals and their reviewer comments were discussed in detail by the attending board members in order of highest to lowest reviewer scores. Dr. Fillingim briefly described each proposal to the Board and requested comments.

Dr. Fillingim estimated the budget for this year (when approved) would likely be the same as last year at \$600,000. Dr. Winterstein confirmed that the Board had initially agreed to allocate \$600,000 to the Grants Program for this coming year. The Board decided to choose the top eight to ten proposals for funding, based on their determination of the strongest proposal.

Dr. Fillingim read the names of those PIs and their Institutions, whose proposals were selected for funding based on detailed discussions: Dr. Azari at the University of Florida, Dr. Eckel at Florida State University, Dr. Sachdeva at Florida A&M University, Dr. Fadool at Florida State University, Dr. Storace at Florida State University, Dr. Vincis at Florida State University, Dr. Markowitz at the University of Florida, Dr. Newman at Florida Atlantic University, and Dr. Ford at the University of Central Florida.

Discussions took place regarding how a funding decision would proceed as the year's budget has not been approved or received. It was decided by the board that if the Consortium receives the same amount of funding as last year (\$600,000), the Consortium will move forward with funding the above 9 proposals. The Board discussed final budgets for each awardee after minor budget cuts and the total award amount for funding the selected proposals would be \$607,399.20. If however, the Consortium receives a budget cut for the next year, the Consortium will reconvene the Board to discuss how the funding decision will be adjusted for the budget cut.

The Consortium and the Board will not release funding names or send award or non-award letters until the state budget has been released. If the budget is not finalized by the end of the fiscal year on June 30<sup>th</sup>, the Consortium will send a standard email to all grant proposal applicants explaining grant award announcements would be delayed until budget decisions are made.

#### **Vote on Grants Program Applicants**

Dr. Fillingim completed a roll call of all voting board members of the Board. The following were in attendance: Dr. Hughes-Harris, Dr. Holmes, Dr. Anderson, Dr. Dietrich, Dr. Flynn, Dr. Rosenthal, and Dr. Orezza. Dr. Fillingim proposed to start the voting process. Dr. Orezza motioned to vote, and Dr. Dietrich seconded the motion. All Board Members present voted in favor of funding the top 9 proposals. No Board Members opposed the decision, and no Board Members abstained from voting.

#### **Journal Agreement: Medical Cannabis and Cannabinoids**

Dr. Winterstein discussed the journal Medical Cannabis and Cannabinoids, which is a new open-access journal by Karger Publishing. The Consortium Leadership Team sought to discuss a memorandum of understanding that would establish this journal as the primary scientific outlet of the Consortium and that was distributed to all board members for review prior to the board meeting.

Currently, the journal is not indexed by PubMed yet as they have not quite met the required number of original research publications. Dr. Winterstein and Dr. Cook provided their feedback and support of collaborating with the journal. The contract would be for two years and could be reassessed at that time if the Consortium decided to commit to the journal this year.

Dr. Fillingim completed a roll call of all voting board members of the Board. The following were in attendance: Dr. Hughes-Harris, Dr. Holmes, Dr. Anderson, Dr. Dietrich, Dr. Flynn, Dr. Rosenthal, and Dr. Orezzaoli. Dr. Fillingim proposed to start the voting process. Dr. Orezzaoli motioned to vote, and Dr. Hughes-Harris seconded the motion. All Board Members present voted in favor of moving forward with the journal agreement. No Board Members opposed the decision, and no Board Members abstained from voting.

Dr. Fillingim opened the floor for final questions or comments from the Board Members. Dr. Dietrich brought up a previous discussion about allowing students to apply for grant funding from the Consortium. The decision was made to table the discussion for the next Board Meeting as the grants program for the upcoming year is already determined, and the student program would be planned for the following year.

Dr. Hughes- Harris has requested support for any connections the Board Members or Consortium may have with Native American communities, organizations, or individuals within the State of Florida for efforts at Florida A&M University related to medical marijuana educational outreach.

#### **Public Comments**

The Chair invited comments from the public and none were submitted.

#### **Closing Remarks**

Dr. Fillingim recapped the discussions today including the pending budget carryforward request and the future of the Consortium budget. Board Members thanked the Consortium Leadership Team for the organization, productivity, and discussion at the meeting.

#### **Adjournment**

Dr. Fillingim adjourned the meeting at 2:31 PM.