

DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

CHARTER OF THE
JOINT BIOMEDICAL LABORATORY RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT AND
CLINICAL SCIENCE RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT SERVICES SCIENTIFIC
MERIT REVIEW BOARD

A. OFFICIAL DESIGNATION: Joint Biomedical Laboratory Research and Development and Clinical Science Research and Development Services Scientific Merit Review Board.

B. OBJECTIVES AND SCOPE OF ACTIVITY: The objectives of the Board are to provide expert review of the scientific quality, budget, safety, and mission-relevance of investigator-initiated research proposals submitted for VA merit review consideration and to offer advice for research program officials on program priorities and policies. The proposals to be reviewed may address research questions within the general area of biomedical and behavioral research or clinical science research. The Board specifically advises the Directors of the Biomedical Laboratory Research and Development Service and the Clinical Science Research and Development Service and the Chief Research and Development Officer on the administration of its intramural program. The Board does not consider grants, contracts, or other forms of extramural research.

C. PERIOD OF TIME NECESSARY FOR THE BOARD TO CARRY OUT ITS PURPOSE(S): The Board performs a continuing service, unrestricted as to time except as periodic review of its functions shall indicate that it is no longer needed. The Board's continued operation is contingent upon renewal of this charter by appropriate action prior to its expiration.

D. OFFICIAL TO WHOM THE BOARD REPORTS: The Board reports to the Directors, Biomedical Laboratory Research and Development Service and Clinical Science Research and Development Service.

E. OFFICE RESPONSIBLE FOR PROVIDING NECESSARY SUPPORT TO THE BOARD: Support for the Board is provided by the Veterans Health Administration, Department of Veterans Affairs.

F. DUTIES OF THE BOARD: The Board advises the Directors, Biomedical Laboratory Research and Development Service and Clinical Science Research and Development Service on the scientific merit and mission relevance of proposals for research funding developed by investigators in or associated with VA medical facilities (medical centers and independent outpatient clinics). The Board identifies human subject, animal subject, and biohazard concerns that must be addressed, and it recommends the level

of budgetary support and duration of support for those proposals with sufficient merit for funding.

As necessary, standing and ad hoc subcommittees of the Board, composed of members from the Board, may be established to perform specific functions within the Board's purview. A member of one subcommittee may serve as a voting member of other subcommittees when his or her expertise is required. Board members will be selected based on professional achievement and expertise in the research subject areas needed. Board membership will reflect equitable geographic, ethnic, and gender representation so long as the effectiveness of the Board is not impaired. Members will serve 4-year staggered appointments contingent upon renewal of the Board's charter. The Board will be composed of approximately 200 members. Some members may be Regular Government Employees (RGE), but the majority of the Board's membership will be Special Government Employees (SGE).

G. ESTIMATED ANNUAL OPERATING COSTS IN DOLLARS AND STAFF-YEARS:

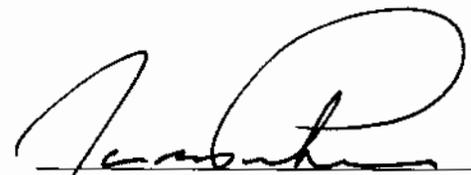
The estimated annual cost for operating the Board is \$1,500,000 and 4.9 staff years. All members receive travel expenses and a per diem allowance in accordance with the Federal Travel Regulation for any travel made in connection with their duties as members of the Board.

H. ESTIMATED FREQUENCY OF BOARD MEETINGS: The Board is expected to meet up to twice annually. The Designated Federal Officer (DFO), a full-time VA employee, will approve the schedule of Board meetings. The DFO or a designee will be present at all meetings, and each meeting will be conducted in accordance with an agenda approved by the DFO. The DFO is authorized to adjourn any meeting when he or she determines it is in the public interest to do so. Subcommittees will meet for scientific merit review at a frequency determined by the number and nature of the proposals. Subcommittees will meet about two times each year. Findings of subcommittees will be reported through the Board for final approval.

I. BOARD TERMINATION DATE: Unless renewed by appropriate action prior to the expiration, the Board will terminate 2 years from the date below.

J. DATE CHARTER IS FILED:

Approved:


James B. Peake, M.D.
Secretary of Veterans Affairs

Date:

6/14/08