

Minutes of the Department of Veterans Affairs
Rehabilitation Research and Development Service
Rehab R& D Service Scientific Merit Review Advisory Board Meeting

March 5 –March 8, 2007

**Crystal Gateway Marriott Hotel
1700 Jefferson Davis Highway
Arlington, VA 22202**

The first part of the meeting was opened on Monday, March 5, 2007 at 8:00 a.m. and adjourned at 5:30 p.m. The meeting was reconvened on Tuesday, March 6, 2007 at 8:00 a.m. and adjourned at 5:30 p.m. The second part of the meeting was opened on Wednesday, March 7, 2007 at 8:00 a. m. and adjourned at 5:30 p.m. The meeting was reconvened on Thursday, March 8, 2007 and adjourned at 5:30 p.m. The meeting was announced in the Federal Register as required. The Board approved the Minutes of the August, 2006 meeting. There were two visitors attending the meeting, Dr. John Townsend, VA Director of Optometry Services and Ellesworth Sharp, representing Blind Veteran's Association.

Robert Ruff, MD, Acting Director welcomed and thanked the Board members for their participation. Dr Ruff provided a brief program overview and update on R&D activities. Patricia Dom, PhD, Deputy Director commented on procedural issues as well as instructions on the review process to be followed during the meetings.

Dudley Childress, Ph. D., Advisory Committee Chair, served as meeting Chair for the first session. Dr. Childress welcomed members, and reviewed the scope of work for the first meeting. Walter Penk, Ph.D., Panel Chair, Mental Health Panel served as meeting Chair for the second session. Dr. Penk welcomed and reviewed the scope of work for the second part of the meeting. The Board was asked to review a total of 153 proposals, including Career Development Applications, during the two sessions. Conflict of Interest and Ethics material (included in reviewers' packets) were pointed out for the members to review and sign.

Board members were informed that the proceedings and recommendations of merit review are considered privileged information. Members were instructed to absent themselves from discussions or recommendations of proposals where a potential conflict existed. Each member signed a Conflict of Interest Statement. A paper issued by VA General Counsel on "The Rules for Advisory Committee Members" was distributed by mail. Attendees are listed on the Board List.

Board Recommendations:

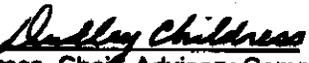
Proposals were distributed among 13 Review Panels and reviewed during two consecutive sessions. A Summary Statement reflecting the recommendations of the Board was prepared for each proposal. Proposals were rated on scientific and program relevance. The Summary Statements along with the individual reviewer's reports for each proposal were collected. Each proposal was scored by ballot and a signed score sheet was collected from each reviewer.

Of the 153 applications reviewed, 55 applications received a score within the fundable range and/or within a high priority program relevancy range and 98 applications received a score within the non-fundable range.

Attached are the meeting agendas and names of attendees.

The next Merit Review Board Meeting is scheduled for August 29-30, 2007 at the Madison Hotel and on September 5-6, 2007 at the Sofitel Hotel. Both hotels are located in Washington, DC.

Submitted by 
Terri Carlton, MPH
Designated Federal Officer

Approved by 
Dudley Childress, Chair, Advisory Committee
Rehab R& D Scientific Review Board