

Department of Veterans Affairs
Charter of the
Joint Biomedical Laboratory Research and Development and Clinical Science
Research and Development Services
Scientific Merit Review Board

1. Committee's Official Designation. Joint Biomedical Laboratory Research and Development and Clinical Science Research and Development Services Scientific Merit Review Board.

2. Authority. The Joint Biomedical Laboratory Research and Development and Clinical Science Research and Development Services Scientific Merit Review Board (Board) is established by directive of the Secretary of the Department of Veteran Affairs (VA) and operates under the provisions of the Federal Advisory Committee Act, as amended, 5 U.S.C. Ch 10.

3. Objectives and Scope of Activities. The objectives of the Board are to provide expert review of the scientific quality, budget, safety, and mission-relevance of investigator-initiated research applications submitted for VA merit review consideration and to offer advice for research program officials on program priorities and policies. The applications to be reviewed may address research questions within the general area of biomedical and behavioral research or clinical science research. The Board does not consider grants, contracts, or other forms of extramural research.

4. Description of Duties. The Board advises the Deputy Chief Research and Development Officer (CRADO) for Investigators, Scientific Review and Management (ISRM) and the CRADO on strategies, goals and direction to support emerging issues and topics in Veteran health care through research, scientific and technical merit, and mission relevance. The Board identifies protections for human and animal subjects, and identifies biohazard concerns that must be addressed. It also recommends the level of budgetary support and duration of support for those applications with sufficient merit for funding.

5. Official to Whom the Committee Reports. The Board reports to the Deputy CRADO for ISRM.

6. Support. Support for the Board is provided by the Office of Research and Development, Veterans Health Administration, VA.

7. Estimated Annual Operating Costs and Staff Years. The estimated annual cost for operating the Board is \$1,600,000 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.

8. Designated Federal Officer. The Designated Federal Officer (DFO), a full-time VA employee, will approve the schedule of Board and subcommittee 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 they determine it is in the public interest to do so.

9. Estimated Number and Frequency Of Meetings. The Board is expected to meet up to twice annually.

10. Duration. The Board performs a continuing service, unrestricted as to time except as a 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.

11. Termination. Unless renewed by appropriate action prior to the expiration, the Board will terminate 2 years from the filing date below.

12. Membership and Designation. Board members will be selected based on professional achievement and expertise in the research subject areas needed. The Board shall represent, to the extent possible, diversity in race/ethnicity, gender, geographical background and Veterans of diverse eras and branches of service. Members shall serve 2- to 4-year staggered appointments and may, at times, serve a one-year renewed appointment, contingent upon renewal of the Board's charter. The Board will be composed of approximately 32 members (subcommittee chairs). Some members will be Regular Government Employees but the majority of the Board's membership will be Special Government Employees.

13. Subcommittees. With the DFO's approval, the Board is authorized to create subcommittees to perform specific projects or assignments as necessary and consistent with its mission. The Board chair shall notify the Deputy CRADO for ISRM of the creation of any subcommittee, including its function, membership and estimated duration. Subcommittees must report their recommendations and advice to the Board. A subcommittee must not provide advice or work products directly to VA.

14. Recordkeeping. Records of the Board shall be handled in accordance with General Records Schedule 6.2 or other approved agency records disposition schedules. Those records shall be available for public inspection and copying, subject to the Freedom of Information Act, 5 U.S.C. § 552.

15. Filing Date.

Approved. _____/s/_____
Denis McDonough
Secretary of Veterans Affairs

____4/11/2024____
Date