

**Integrated Population Health Data (iPHD) Project
Governing Board (GB) Meeting Minutes
October 21, 2022**

1:00 PM-3:00 PM EST

iPHD Governing Board meeting convened in compliance with the New Jersey Open Public Meetings Act. All participants attended the meeting virtually due to the Covid-19 pandemic restrictions.

Board Members Present:

Rachel Hammond (Chair and Designee for the Commissioner of Health Data Privacy Officer, NJ Department of Health), Joel Cantor (Ex officio/ Non-voting, Director of Rutgers Center for State Health Policy), Rashmi Jain (Appointed- Big Data/Security Expert, Chair of Information Management and Business Analytics, Montclair State University), Francis Baker (Ex officio/Designee for the NJ Attorney General, Deputy Attorney General, NJ Office of the Attorney General), Greg Woods (Ex officio/Designee for the NJ Commissioner of Human Services, Chief Innovation Officer, Division of Medical Assistance and Health Services Department of Human Services), Elizabeth Litten (Appointed- Legal & Privacy Expert, Partner and Chief Privacy & HIPAA Compliance Officer, Fox Rothschild LLP), Kathleen Noonan (Appointed- Chief Executive Officer, Camden Coalition of Healthcare Providers) and Janet Currie (Appointed- Human Subjects Research Expert, Professor of Economics and Policy Affairs, Princeton University)

Attendees:

Margaret Koller (Rutgers Center for State Health Policy), Mark McNally (NJ Office of the Attorney General), Suzanne Borys (NJ Department of Human Services), Eileen Troutman (NJ Department of Health), Maria Baron (NJ Department of Health), Darrin Goldman (NJ Department of Health), Stella Tsai (NJ Department of Health), Yong Sung Lee (NJ Department of Health), Brandie Wooding (NJ Department of Health), Sam Krauss (NJ Department of Human Services), Kara Unal (NJ Department of Health), Jose Nova (Rutgers Center for State Health Policy), Kate Scotto (Rutgers Center for State Health

Policy), Jolene Chou (Rutgers Center for State Health Policy), Ed Liu (Rutgers Center for State Health Policy), Oliver Lontok (Rutgers Center for State Health Policy), Joe Brecht (Rutgers Center for State Health Policy), and Manisha Agrawal (Rutgers Center for State Health Policy)

Call to Order/Opening Remarks

- R. Hammond called the meeting to order at 1:07 pm with a quorum present.
- R. Hammond acknowledged that the meeting was being held in compliance with the 1975 NJ Open Public Meetings Act and that there was a publication of meeting time and location in the Newark Star Ledger and three websites (NJ. Com, NJ Press Association, and the iPHD website). Instructions for registration and login information was posted in the publications and the websites.

General Updates/Actions

Updates from the Chair

- R. Hammond provided an update on the changes in the senior management at DOH. DOH has three newly appointed Assistant Commissioners in the Public Health Services branch. Additionally, DOH appointed Michele Calvo as Director of Opioid Policy and Response. She also mentioned that the bivalent COVID boosters and flu shots are available.
- R. Hammond said the DOH will soon sign a modification to the MOA for an additional \$400K in funding for FY 2023. An earlier modification, also for \$400K for FY 22 is currently pending and is expected to be executed soon. This additional funding will be used to support additional pilot projects in the next proposal cycle.
- R. Hammond reminded everyone that the main agenda item is discussion of the Cycle I applications and selecting applications for pilot funding. She thanked the Board members for their support of the iPHD which has reached an important milestone with the selection of Cycle 1 applicants.

Meeting Minutes

- R. Hammond requested Board members review the July 15, 2022 Governing Board meeting minutes (approved by Minutes Subcommittee on August 16, 2022).
- J. Currie made a motion to approve the July meeting minutes. R. Jain provided the second and, upon roll call, the minutes were approved unanimously.

Data Transfer

- J. Nova said that CSHP received the 2021 CDRSS data and discussions are ongoing to transfer the EMS data for the next proposal cycle.
- J. Nova said that the data team is engaged in data cleaning and organization, data validation, linkage testing, and identifying confidential fields for creating limited datasets.

Discussion

Cycle I Proposals

- R. Hammond requested the Board members with any conflict to recuse themselves before any discussion of the Cycle I applications. She instructed them to stay in the virtual room, turn off their camera, and mute themselves for this portion of the meeting. She added that they will be called back into the virtual meeting for discussion of subsequent agenda items. J. Cantor and E. Litten recused themselves from the Cycle I proposal discussions.
- R. Hammond requested all non-Board members attending to mute themselves until the public comments section of the meeting.
- R. Hammond reminded everyone that 11 applications for pilot-funding were received. iPHD did not receive any data-only applications. All applicants will receive reviewer feedback should those not selected in this round wish to reapply in a future cycle.
- M. Koller provided an overview of the review process.
 - CSHP completed the first review of all applications for completeness and compliance.
 - Applications were assigned to three Research Advisory Committee (RAC) members with expertise in: methods, use of the data set(s) that was/were being requested, and the subject matter. She thanked the RAC members on the call for their reviews and support of the iPHD.
 - CSHP synthesized the reviews into a two-page summary and then shared that summary along with the individual reviews and the application materials with the Governing Board subcommittee. The subcommittee met on October 4th to discuss the applications and recommended four applications for pilot funding.

- o M. Koller requested the subcommittee chair, K. Noonan, to report out the subcommittee's recommendations to the Governing Board.
- o M. Koller noted that the limited data sets for the approved applicants will be released by the end of the calendar year into January 2023.
- R. Hammond said for Cycle I, there was an opportunity to fund up to four pilot projects (up to \$40K each). She requested K. Noonan to go through each application and share the subcommittee's recommendations.
- Due to a personal schedule conflict, R. Jain could not participate in the October 4th meeting, but was informed of the recommendations. K. Noonan and J. Currie discussed the strengths and weaknesses of all 11 proposals and provided justification for selecting/not selecting each proposal. The recommendations for four applications for pilot funding include:
 1. Title: Perinatal depression and emergency department visits in the postpartum period: a quasi-experimental analysis (Application #101)
 Institution: Rutgers School of Public Health
 PI(s): Slawa Rokicki, Instructor; Mark McGovern, Assistant Professor
 2. Title: Social Vulnerability, Disparities, and the Health Impacts of the Intersecting COVID-19 and Opioid Epidemics on New Jersey Communities (Application #104)
 Institution: Rutgers University - Institute for Health, Health Care Policy and Aging Research
 PI: Stephen Crystal, Distinguished Research Professor
 3. Title: Trends in Adverse Birth Outcomes: Variations by Race and COVID-19 Exposure (Application #108)
 Institution: Central Jersey Family Health Consortium
 PI: Cheryl A. S. McFarland, Director of Evaluation & Analytics
 4. Title: Ensuring Programmatic Exposure and Efficacy in Areas of Greatest Need: A Geographical Study of Mental Health Outcomes and Provision of Behavioral Health Services by the NJ Pediatric Psychiatry Collaborative (Application #109)
 Institution: Jersey Shore University Medical Center
 PI: Ramon Solhkhah, Chair, Department of Psychiatry
- K. Noonan said that the subcommittee reviewed each proposal thoroughly as well as the individual RAC reviews. She noted that there was some disagreement among the RAC reviewers' comments and in some cases, there was some inconsistency between their written comments and overall numeric scoring. The subcommittee suggested to provide additional training to the RAC members in Cycle II to facilitate additional clarity regarding reviewer recommendations. In

addition, J. Currie suggested that we should consider eliminating numeric scoring as part of the review process.

- R. Hammond thanked the subcommittee and reminded everyone that the final decision about releasing data and funding rests with the Governing Board.
- J. Currie said that there were a few items in the proposals such as travel budget, using funds for paying a community advisory board etc., that need further clarification. M. Koller responded that CSHP is making a list of items that should be further clarified in the subsequent RFA.
- G. Woods asked about the threshold and how the subcommittee ended up recommending the release of data for projects that would receive pilot funding. He thought that the goal was to approve the release of data for as many proposals as feasible, unless the proposal was of particularly poor quality. J. Currie added that some of the proposals not recommended for funding had critical weaknesses. K. Noonan suggested that the applicants who weren't chosen can certainly resubmit their proposals in the upcoming cycle.
- J. Currie suggested adding a check box, indicating, "I could still do the project if not funded", and allow applicants to identify themselves.
- R. Hammond said that all applications were for pilot funding, and we can add the refinements to our "to do list" for Cycle II. She suggested moving to the voting process. She added that those applicants not approved will be provided feedback from the reviewers, and they will have the opportunity to apply in Cycle II.
 - G. Woods agreed that it would be good in future rounds to add a box on the application that indicates interest in receiving the data without funding.
 - M. Koller said that for the applications that are approved for data, but not funding, would have to pay the data fees. In the next application cycle, it will be important to identify the researcher's preference for receiving data and ability to pay the fees.
 - G. Woods said that if the application does not meet the threshold for pilot funding, but has no "red flags", and the applicant has the funding to pay the fees, he would then be comfortable with sharing data. He suggested that there still has to be some kind of review criteria to ensure that the proposal aligns with the iPHD purpose and the priorities. There is a balance to be struck.

- o J. Currie said that scientific merit should to be assessed, because there is always some reidentification risk, even minimal, that accompanies the release of data, so the Governing Board should be mindful of research. K. Noonan agreed that decisions need to be made carefully as Board has the delegated responsibility from the state agencies to make the decision regarding appropriate data transfer and it will be good to set a criteria.
- o M. Koller said that CSHP will create a more explicit rubric to support the review process.
- R. Hammond stated that the Governing Board would be voting by roll call.
 - o R. Hammond requested Board members to make a motion to accept the recommendations of the subcommittee to provide funding and fee waivers to proposals #101, #104, #108 and #109, as noted above.
 - o G. Woods made a motion, R. Jain provided a second and, upon roll call, the motion carried with all non-recused members voting “aye”. R. Hammond also noted that there were two recused members and one member who was not present: J. Cantor (a non-voting member) and L. Litten who were recused, and M. Norin was not in attendance.
- R. Hammond thanked the Board and the review subcommittee for their work.

Preparing for Cycle II

- R. Hammond invited the recused members to unmute themselves and turn their cameras on and rejoin the meeting. She reminded the Board members that Cycle I proposals will not be further discussed.
- M. Koller noted that we will be making some modifications in Cycle II based on experiences and lessons learned from Cycle I. There will also be pilot funding in the next application round.
- M. Koller said that there is a need to expand the Research Advisory Committee. There are currently 34 reviewers on the RAC, however certain reviewers were prevented from reviewing proposals in Cycle I due to strict conflict of interest rules that were established. That presented a logistical challenge and highlighted the need for additional reviewers.
- M. Koller said Joe Brecht, the Center’s communication specialist, initiated a social media communication strategy in prep for Cycle II.
- M. Koller reminded everyone that J. Cantor provided an overview of the RWJF’s Health Data for Action (HD4A) program during the last meeting. She added that

the discussions are ongoing with the Program Officer at RWJF to include iPHD in their next cycle, and the timing would align well with Cycle II applications. This would be a dual application process for the applicants, and the data fees would be paid by HD4A to iPHD for all approved projects.

- M. Koller shared a preliminary Cycle II timeline with the tentative plan to release the RFP in January. She also suggested a brief meeting of the Board in December to address some issues raised in today's meeting in advance of Cycle II. O. Lontok will be in touch for scheduling subsequent meetings.

Public Comments

- R. Hammond asked if any of non-Board members, members of the public who are in attendance would like to make a public comment. Each person would be allotted three minutes to speak.
- S. Borys, a DOH colleague and also a member of the RAC, shared her comment on the review requirements specifically, the data security plan. She said that reviewers were asked to review the appropriateness of the data security plans but that information was not requested from the applicants. She suggested the need for clarity around the requirements in the next cycle. M. Koller responded that the initial plan was to request the information in the application, but it was later determined that the request should be made as part of the execution of the Data Use Agreement (DUA) which comes after a project is approved. CSHP will harmonize the documents to ensure that the review criteria are consistent with the direction given to the applicants. J. Cantor said that CSHP will conduct a rigorous review of data security plans for approved applications.

R. Hammond indicated the need for the executive session for legal guidance. The open session of the Governing Board meeting was adjourned at 2:28 pm.

- K. Noonan made a motion to adjourn and move to the executive session.
- R. Jain offered a second.
- Unanimous vote to adjourn the open session and move to the executive session of the meeting.

R. Hammond asked for a motion to end executive session at the conclusion of the discussion and also adjourn the public meeting.

- G. Woods made the dual motion and J. Currie offered a second.
- Unanimous vote to conclude both executive session and the public session at 2:39 pm.