

**Integrated Population Health Data (iPHD) Project  
Governing Board (GB) Meeting Minutes  
December 19, 2022**

**3:00 PM-4:00 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), 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), Michele Calvo (NJ Department of Health), Bretta Jacquemin (NJ Department of Health), Tim Seplaki (NJ Department of Health), Stella Tsai (NJ Department of Health), Maria Baron (NJ Department of Health), 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 3:05 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 said that DOH signed modification to the MOA to add \$400K for FY 22, and will soon sign another modification for an additional \$400K in funding for FY 2023. This additional funding will be used to support pilot projects in the next proposal cycle.
- R. Hammond said that two Cycle I projects were dedicated in memory of Colette Lamothe-Galette and Ranjana Madhusudhan, respectively. M. Koller said that letters notifying this dedication of the projects will be sent to their families.
  - *Trends in Adverse Birth Outcomes: Variations by Race and COVID-19 Exposure (PI: Cheryl A. S. McFarland, Ph.D., Director of Evaluation & Analytics at the Central Jersey Family Health Consortium)* was dedicated to the memory of our friend and colleague **Colette Lamothe-Galette**, MPH, former Deputy Commissioner of the NJ Department of Health who was a lifelong champion for improving maternal health and birth outcomes and child health equity.
  - *Social Vulnerability, Disparities, and the Health Impacts of the Intersecting COVID-19 and Opioid Epidemics on New Jersey Communities (PI: Stephen Crystal, Ph.D., Distinguished Research Professor at Rutgers Institute for Health)* was dedicated to our colleague **Ranjana Madhusudhan**, Ph.D., former Chief Economist at the NJ Department of Treasury who served actively as the Treasurer's designee on the IPHD Governing Board.

## *Meeting Minutes*

- R. Hammond requested Board members review the October 21, 2022 Governing Board meeting minutes (approved by Minutes Subcommittee on November 16, 2022).
- R. Jain made a motion to approve the October meeting minutes. J. Currie provided the second and, upon roll call, the minutes were approved unanimously.

## *Cycle I Update*

- M. Koller said that CSHP completed 1:1 conversations with each of the PI's of all four pilot projects and discussed award set-up, DUA and IRB requirements. Additionally, they discussed a joint press release about the pilot funding including recognition of memorial pilot projects.
- M. Koller said that two pilot projects are internal and this will allow data recipients to remotely access data through the Rutgers Institute for Health high security environment. For the projects external to Rutgers, limited datasets will be shipped out. She added that going forward, the goal is for all data recipients to remotely access data as it is more secure. J. Currie and G. Woods agreed that this is a good strategy for the next round of proposals.

## **Discussion**

### *Cycle II Proposals*

- M. Koller provided an overview of the changes made to the Cycle II application materials.
  - Documents were revised to reflect the feedback received from the Governing Board subcommittee and the general lessons learned from the Cycle I process.
  - Detailed instructions were added to a fillable form to facilitate submissions. R. Jain suggested adding instructions for applicants to provide descriptions about how the proposed research would add to the body of knowledge. J. Currie agreed that it is important to add why this research will help make a unique contribution and that holds the promise of greatly improving the quality of the proposals.
  - Timeline was adjusted to provide additional time for applicants to submit their proposal. The tentative RFA release data for Cycle II is March 1, 2023.

- o Checkboxes were added to the cover page to determine whether applicants are seeking pilot funding, fee waivers, and if not approved for funding, whether they are able to pay data fees. M. Koller added that there will be limited funding available for pilot projects and this will provide some idea about the number of applicants in the position to pay the data fees. She asked for the Board's opinion for utilizing some of the DOH funds for fee waivers. J. Currie agreed that this would provide an opportunity to applicants not selected for pilot funding.
- o Discussions are ongoing with T. Seplaki and ImageTrend for EMS data transfer.
- J. Cantor requested that Board members share any comments they have on the applications materials, but a vote does not have to be taken.
- R. Hammond said that transfer of immunization and Medicaid data may be next, and the next steps would be legal review for bringing these two datasets into the iPHD.

#### *Research Advisory Committee (RAC)*

- J. Cantor shared that there are currently 34 reviewers on the RAC, however certain reviewers were precluded from reviewing proposals in Cycle I due to strict conflict of interest rules and that made it challenging to identify the right mix of reviewers. There is a need to substantially expand the RAC for Cycle II. E. Litten asked if it would be helpful to look outside NJ. J. Cantor responded that the plan is to look for both non-Rutgers reviewers in NJ as well as reviewers outside NJ.
- M. Koller requested the Board members share their recommendations for additional reviewers.

#### *Review Process*

- J. Cantor said that based on the Cycle I experiences, substantial changes will be made to the application review form. Narrow range of scoring will be used and clear instructions will be added for both scoring method and for providing justification for each criteria and the overall score. Additionally, if the reviewers feel that they don't have the expertise to review any criterion, they will have an option to leave the score blank.
- J. Cantor said that the redesigned forms will be shared in the next Board meeting. M. Koller acknowledged the contributions of the reviewers and said that the

overall quality of review was very good. These changes are mainly to provide more guidance to the reviewers.

- J. Cantor said that for Cycle II, the Governing Board Subcommittee will provide recommendations and prepare a report for the Board. He added that one or two external reviewers will be added to the Subcommittee to minimize the workload and enhance the research perspective on the Subcommittee. M. Koller said that the DOH funds will be used to pay external reviewers for their time.
- M. Koller thanked M. McNally for providing additional guidance for refining the review process after the October 21<sup>st</sup> meeting. R. Hammond agreed that this is part of continuous quality improvement.

#### *RWJF's Health Data for Action (HD4A) program*

- J. Cantor reported that the discussions are ongoing with the RWJF Program Officer to include iPHD in HD4A cycle. 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. This will help promote iPHD to the national level via the RWJF/AcademyHealth networks.
- J. Currie said that sometimes RWJF has intensive monitoring of grantees which is something that needs to be considered for the iPHD data recipients. R. Jain said that RWJF may be willing to negotiate and provide exceptions to standard reporting requirements. M. Koller responded that the discussions are in early stages and more details will be shared in the next Board meeting.

#### *2023 Meeting Schedule*

- O. Lontok said the plan is to schedule bimonthly meetings and he will be in touch soon with meeting dates to confirm availability.

**R. Hammond indicated the need for the executive session for legal guidance. R. Hammond asked if anyone would like to make a public comment. There were no comments and the open session of the Governing Board meeting was adjourned at 4:01 pm.**

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