

**Integrated Population Health Data (iPHD) Project  
Governing Board (GB) Meeting Minutes  
February 10, 2023**

**3:00 PM-4:30 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), Suzanne Borys (NJ Department of Human Services), Bretta Jacquemin (NJ Department of Health), Tim Seplaki (NJ Department of Health), Maria Baron (NJ Department of Health), Darrin Goldman (NJ Department of Health), Jose Nova (Rutgers Center for State Health Policy), Kate Scotto (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 3:04 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 were posted in the publications and the websites.

## **General Updates/Actions**

### *Updates from the Chair*

- R. Hammond reminded everyone that the federal government is ending the COVID public health emergency on May 11, 2023.
- R. Hammond said that DOH modified the iPHD MOA with Rutgers and added \$400K in funding for FY 2023. An additional request was made to add another \$400K in funding to iPHD for FY 2024.
- R. Hammond thanked the Board members for their support of the iPHD which is getting ready to launch the next cycle.

### *Meeting Minutes*

- R. Hammond requested Board members review the December 19, 2022, Governing Board meeting minutes (approved by the Minutes Subcommittee on January 20, 2023).
- J. Currie made a motion to approve the December meeting minutes. G. Woods provided the second, and upon roll call, the minutes were approved unanimously.

### *Migration to Rutgers OIT Computing Platform*

- M. Koller reminded the Board that at a previous governing board meeting, M. Norin discussed the planned migration of datasets housed at Rutgers Institute for Health (where the iPHD data are currently stored) to the Clinical Research Data Warehouse (CRDW) a central data repository at Rutgers. A third party cyber security assessment was completed by the NJ Department of Homeland Security for the current IFH environment 3 years ago. A comparable assessment will be completed for the CRDW prior to the migration.

### *Cycle I Pilot Updates*

- M. Koller provided an update on the status of the pilot awards including:

- o Data Use Agreements (DUA's) have been executed for three of the four approved projects and the IRB approvals are pending for all.
- o Discussions are ongoing regarding budget modifications and award set-up to transfer funding.
- o CSHP is planning a press release to acknowledge the pilot awards and launching a Cycle I project page on the website to highlight these projects.
- o Next steps are to create the requested limited dataset for each project. Data transfer is dependent on the IRB approval (tentatively March 2023).

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

- M. Koller said that discussions are ongoing with the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (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 approved projects. Some key points are listed below:
  - o Special cycle in late spring/summer 2023.
  - o Applications will be reviewed by RWJF reviewers.
  - o Reviews will be shared with the Governing Board and it will be Board's decision to review and approve iPHD projects.
  - o Data fees for up to two approved projects will be paid by HD4A to iPHD.
  - o This will help promote iPHD nationally through the RWJF/AcademyHealth networks. It may also generate additional funding opportunities.
- J. Currie asked if the iPHD research priorities will be highlighted. J. Cantor responded that CSHP will conduct a preliminary review to ensure that applications align with the iPHD requirements.

**Discussion**

*Cycle II Application Process*

- M. Koller provided an overview of the changes made to the Cycle II application materials.
  - o CSHP revised the documents to reflect the feedback received from the Governing Board subcommittee and the general lessons learned from the Cycle I process.

- o CSHP designed fillable forms to facilitate and organize the information and added detailed instructions.
- o CSHP increased the time between the RFA release and the full application submission. The RFA release data for Cycle II is March 1, 2023, letter of intent is due on March 22, 2023, and the full application submission date is April 26, 2023.
- o Discussions are ongoing with T. Seplaki and ImageTrend for EMS data transfer.

*Pilot Awards vs. Fee Waivers*

- M. Koller compared the cost of funding a pilot project vs. a fee waiver project. She asked for the Board’s opinion regarding offering funding vs. fee waivers in Cycle II. Generally speaking, funding for one pilot project (with waiver of data fees) is equivalent to offering waivers of data fees (without pilot awards) for three projects alone.
  - o R. Jain said that it depends upon what we want to accomplish. J. Cantor responded that the proposed change is to accommodate more projects (based on the quality of the applications). Some organizations may not have funds available to pay data fees but may have researchers time covered.
  - o R. Hammond asked if we need to include the number of pilots and fee waivers in the RFA. Is it possible to decide based on the quality of the applications submitted? J. Cantor responded that we need to signal the scope of available funding for pilot projects/fee waivers in the RFA but we can give a range.
  - o E. Litten suggested to conduct a merit analysis first and blindly rank the applications. J. Cantor agreed that the applications will be ranked and the Board will make the final decision. Additionally, there will be checkboxes for applicants to select if they are applying for pilot funding, fee waivers or data only access (paying for fees) and that information will be shared with the Board.
- M.Koller said that the RFA will be modified to include a range for the number of pilot and fee waiver options with a disclaimer that it is contingent on the continued availability of funds.

*Review Process*

- M. Koller provided an update on the Research Advisory Committee expansion:

- o Invited Cycle I pilot funding recipients.
- o Ongoing outreach to relevant academic and professional organizations to add more reviewers. To date, added 33 new reviewers (total=60).
- o Requested the Board members to share their recommendations for additional reviewers.
- M. Koller said that based on the Cycle I experience, substantial changes were made to the application review form to provide more guidance to the reviewers. Some key points noted include:
  - o Redesigned the scoring strategy (4-point scale from 1 (strong) to 4 (major problems)) and added instructions to harmonize the review criteria with the numeric rating and written comments.
  - o Added instructions for reviewers to leave the score blank if they feel that they don't have the expertise to review any criterion.
- R. Jain asked how resubmissions will be managed. J. Cantor responded that the applicant has to describe how the proposed project changed from the last submission. M. Koller said that new reviewers may be assigned for resubmitted application and the previous (Cycle I) reviews will be shared with them. R. Jain suggested to assign to the same reviewer where appropriate. J. Cantor agreed.
- J. Cantor said that one or two external reviewers will be added to the Subcommittee to minimize the workload and enhance the research perspective of the Subcommittee.

#### *Communication Strategies*

- M. Koller said that CSHP is curating multiple email lists and planning for an email blast to announce the RFA release on March 1, 2023. Some other outreach channels include LinkedIn, Twitter and newsletters from other organizations.

**R. Hammond indicated that executive session is not needed. 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 3:50 pm.**

- E. Litten made a motion to adjourn the meeting.
- J. Currie offered a second.
- Unanimous vote to adjourn the open session of the meeting.