

SUMMARY MINUTES

NATIONAL CANCER ADVISORY BOARD SUBCOMMITTEE ON ORGAN SITE PROGRAMS

Conference Room 8A28, A Wing
NIH
Building 31, Bethesda, Maryland

April 22, 1981

The NCAB Subcommittee on Organ Site Programs convened at 1:00 p.m. on April 22, 1981, on the NIH campus, Building 31, A Wing, Room 8A28. Attached is a list of the Subcommittee; Mrs. Lombardi, Dr. Mostofi, and Dr. Selikoff were absent. In addition, Dr. LaSalle Leffall attended as an invited consultant from the National Cancer Advisory Board. The following NCI Staff were present: Dr. Vincent J. Cairoli, Dr. William E. Straile, and Dr. Jane Taylor. Also present were two members of the public.

Dr. Powers convened the meeting in open session. He announced that he had met earlier that day with Dr. DeVita and based on this meeting Dr. Powers identified the following agenda items: (1) preservation of planning, review and communication activities within the Organ Site Program, (2) review of R26 grants, (3) possible phase out of Organ Site Projects, and (4) Organ Site Budget.

Initial discussion centered around the need for continuing the Organ Site Program. It was agreed that if the current program were converted to an R01 program, the level of investigational activity in each of the four organ site areas would drop significantly. Additional discussion centered around the question of whether there should be other organ site programs as for example, a lung program.

The current budget for the Organ Site Program was discussed. It was noted that when the NCI rescission budget did not pass the Congress, there was no restoration of funds to the Organ Site Program at the prerescision level.

It was noted that there is a need to be assured that there is high quality among all the Organ Site Projects. Therefore, an effort should be made to look into the program, to conduct an in-depth review of quality among the four Projects, and to support those that are judged to be of high quality. The Subcommittee felt that any Project failing to meet certain standards might be considered for phase out and those dollars currently allocated to that Project should be redistributed among the existing Projects.

The Subcommittee noted that the Projects are engaged in needed activities that are not being done elsewhere and therefore they should continue. Furthermore, funding should not be reduced. It was recommended that the Subcommittee develop a statement which addresses and supports the unique modus operandi of the Organ Site Program, noting that the rationale is as valid today as it was when the Program was implemented, and therefore the mechanism should continue.

The following motion was made and seconded: (1) the Subcommittee recommends that the FY 1981 recision cuts be restored to the Organ Site budget, (2) the Subcommittee wishes to be assured that high quality is maintained among all the Organ Site Projects, and therefore, recommends that an in-depth review of the Program be conducted by an outside independent body to facilitate future decisions regarding program expansion and/or contraction, and (3) the Subcommittee recommends exploration of the feasibility for starting other programs, such as one for lung and upper respiratory tract. The motion carried unanimously.

It was noted that three of the four active Organ Site Projects soon will be submitting Headquarters renewal applications, which ordinarily would be reviewed in the spring or early summer of 1982. The in-depth review recommended by the Organ Site Subcommittee would occur sufficiently in advance of that time, so that the results could serve as a basis for inviting or disinviting Headquarters renewal applications. It was suggested that two Subcommittee members attend each Headquarters renewal application review as observers.

The Subcommittee then discussed the nature of the in-depth review recommended in the above motion. It was agreed that this should be an independent committee of senior level basic and clinical scientists who would perform a general review of the entire program. The committee would be composed of no less than six but no more than ten scientists. It was further recommended that Dr. William A. Walter, Jr., serve as the Executive Secretary of this committee. The Division of Extramural Activities will nominate members and alternates for this committee which will serve as an ad hoc subgroup of the Subcommittee on Organ Site Programs; the list of candidates will be submitted to the Organ Site Subcommittee which would then select the individuals. In order to assure complete independence of the committee, it was agreed that although Subcommittee and NCI Organ Site Staff members might attend the review, they would neither participate in nor be present at the executive sessions. The review should be conducted in Bethesda and it is estimated that the committee would meet for three days preceded by an evening executive session. The first two days would be devoted to receiving presentations from each of the four Projects with an appropriate executive session after each presentation; the third day would be devoted to an evaluation of the entire program and preparation of a report.

The Subcommittee adjourned at 3:30 p.m.