



## ***Division of Extramural Activities***

### **DCLG Working Groups Supplemental Material:**

Background Statement

November 6, 1997

#### **Purpose**

The National Cancer Institute (NCI), the federal government's primary agency for cancer research, is launching a new initiative--the Director's Consumer Liaison Group (DCLG). The DCLG will help NCI increase the representation of the cancer advocacy community on NCI advisory committees, and increase their involvement in program and policy development. The DCLG consists of fifteen (15) consumer-advocates who are involved in cancer advocacy. The NCI is bringing together these advocates from diverse communities, creating a two-way street that enables them to interact directly with the scientific community at NCI on a wide range of programs and issues. The DCLG will also help NCI to widen the pool of qualified consumer-advocates who can be called upon to serve on NCI advisory committees and other groups.

The three-fold purpose of the DCLG, which will meet several times a year, is to:

- Help develop and establish processes, mechanisms, and criteria for identifying appropriate consumer-advocates to serve on a variety of program and policy advisory committees responsible for advancing the mission of the NCI.
- Serve as a primary forum for discussing issues and concerns and exchanging viewpoints that are important to the broad development of NCI programmatic and research priorities.
- Establish and maintain strong collaborations between NCI and the cancer advocacy community to reach common goals.

The DCLG will provide advice and make recommendations to the Advisory Committee to the Director, NCI\*. The Office of Liaison Activities, NCI, will coordinate and support the DCLG.

#### **Membership Selection Process**

A Planning Group (PG) of consumer-advocates and NCI staff was formed to help establish the DCLG. The PG met in March 1997 to assist in defining the initial role of the DCLG, and to define the criteria for individual members, the characteristics of the DCLG as a whole, and the nomination, screening and scoring processes for selecting members. A summary of the meeting results follows.

**Eligibility Requirements for Individual Members.** A member of the DCLG was required to:

- **Be involved in the cancer experience: a cancer survivor, a person affected by the suffering and consequences of cancer, or a professional/volunteer who works with survivors or those affected.**
- **Represent a constituency (formally or informally) with which s/he communicates regularly on cancer issues and be able to serve as a conduit for information both *to and from* his/her constituency.**

Another essential requirement was a commitment to participating in the DCLG. This was not used in the initial screening of nominees, but was assessed as part of a more in-depth evaluation of qualified candidates.

**Criteria for Evaluating Individual Candidates.** Nominees who met the minimum eligibility requirements were further assessed based on the following criteria:

- **Cancer advocacy experience**
- **Ability to communicate effectively**
- **Ability to represent broad issues, think "globally"**
- **Ability to contribute to an effective group process** (e.g., cooperative, constructive, flexible, innovative)
- **Leadership ability** (While members of the DCLG were not required to hold a formal leadership position within a cancer advocacy organization, they had to have leadership skills.)

**Characteristics of the DCLG.** In addition to the criteria for individual candidates, the following characteristics of the DCLG as a group were intended to ensure that it reflect the breadth and diversity of the consumer advocacy community:

- **Multicultural diversity**
- **A broad mix of cancer sites**
- **Representation of the medically underserved**
- **Men and women**
- **A range of organizations** (local/regional and national)
- **Age diversity**
- **Geographic diversity** (rural/urban mix )

**Screening, Scoring and Review Process.** After nominees were screened for eligibility, they were scored in terms of the criteria. A list of highly qualified candidates who reflected balance and diversity of representation was forwarded to the Director, NCI, for selection of the DCLG members. The members were announced November 6, 1997.

**Nomination Process.** A call for nominations was disseminated to a broad range of groups, including local/regional as well as national organizations, to encourage nominations of candidates reflecting the diversity sought for the DCLG. Nominations came from members of organizations, or individuals, including self-nominations. The call for nominations went out in May, 1997, and all nominations were required to be postmarked by September 15, 1997. Requests for information about how to submit nominations, were directed to the **Office of Liaison Activities, NCI**, Bldg. 31 Room 10A06, 31 Center Drive, MSC 2580, Bethesda, MD 20892-2580.

\* This committee consists of the Director, NCI, as chair; the Chair of the National Cancer Advisory Board; and the Chairs and Co-chairs of the NCI Board of Scientific Counselors and Board of Scientific Advisors, respectively. The three non-voting ex-officio members are the Deputy Director, NCI; Director, Division of Extramural Activities, NCI; and the Associate Director for Science Policy, NCI.