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Blue Ribbon Panel Announced to Help Guide Vice President Biden’s National Cancer Moonshot Initiative

Today, the National Cancer Institute (NCI), part of the National Institutes of Health, announced a Blue Ribbon Panel of scientific experts, cancer leaders, and patient advocates that will inform the scientific direction and goals at NCI of Vice President Joe Biden’s National Cancer Moonshot Initiative. The panel will serve as a working group of the presidentially appointed National Cancer Advisory Board (NCAB) and will provide scientific guidance from thought-leaders in the cancer community.

“This Blue Ribbon Panel will ensure that, as NIH allocates new resources through the Moonshot, decisions will be grounded in the best science,” said the Vice President. “I look forward to working with this panel and many others involved with the Moonshot to make unprecedented improvements in prevention, diagnosis, and treatment of cancer.”

Over the next several months, the panel will consider how to advance the themes that have been proposed for the initiative. The themes include the development of cancer vaccines, highly sensitive approaches to early detection, advances in immunotherapy and combination therapies, single-cell genomic profiling of cancer cells and cells in the tumor microenvironment, enhanced data sharing, and new approaches to the treatment of pediatric cancers.

In addition, the cancer community, including the American public, will be provided a forum to post comments and insights to help inform the panel’s deliberations. Findings of the panel will be reported to the NCAB, which in turn will make its recommendations to NCI and contribute to the overall approach of the initiative.

“Thanks to advances in science, we are now in a historically unique position to make profound improvements in the way we treat, detect, and prevent cancer,” said NIH Director Francis S. Collins, M.D., Ph.D. “The Vice President’s deep personal commitment to this noble cause will make a tremendous difference in our ability to lift the terrible burden of cancer. His call to action, including the establishment of this panel, comes at just the right time for all the right reasons.”

“The Vice President’s enthusiasm about this effort is welcomed by the community of researchers, health professionals, and patients who share his passion and belief that great things are possible by accelerating cancer research with leadership and resources,” said NCI Acting Director Douglas Lowy, M.D. “We are committed to breaking down silos and stimulating the groundbreaking work already underway. To be successful, we must hear a broad range of perspectives to take full advantage of the exceptional current opportunities in cancer research.”

The Blue Ribbon Panel members represent a spectrum of scientific areas, including biology, immunology, genomics, diagnostics, bioinformatics, and cancer prevention and treatment. Scientific members also include investigators with expertise in clinical trials and cancer health disparities. Importantly, the members of cancer advocacy groups and pharmaceutical and biotechnology companies will be represented on the panel and its working groups.

The members of the Blue Ribbon Panel are:

Tyler Jacks, Ph.D. (Co-Chair)

Chair, National Cancer Advisory Board, and Director, Koch Institute for Integrative Cancer Research, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Cambridge

Elizabeth Jaffee, M.D. (Co-Chair)

Professor and Deputy Director for Translational Research, Sidney Kimmel Comprehensive Cancer Center, Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine, Baltimore

Dinah Singer, Ph.D. (Co-Chair)

Acting Deputy Director and Division of Cancer Biology Director, National Cancer Institute, Bethesda, Maryland

Peter Adamson, M.D.

Professor and Director, Experimental Therapeutics in Oncology, The Children's Hospital of Philadelphia

James Allison, Ph.D.

Professor and Chair of Immunology, University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center, Houston

David Arons, J.D.

Chief Executive Officer, National Brain Tumor Society, Newton, Massachusetts

Mary Beckerle, Ph.D.

CEO and Director, Huntsman Cancer Institute, Salt Lake City

Mitch Berger, M.D.

Professor and Chair, Department of Neurological Surgery, University of California, San Francisco

Jeff Bluestone, Ph.D.

Executive Vice Chancellor and Provost, University of California, San Francisco

Mikael Dolsten, M.D., Ph.D.

President, Pfizer Worldwide Research and Development, and Executive Vice President, Pfizer, Inc., New York City

James Downing, M.D.

President and CEO, St. Jude Children's Research Hospital, Memphis, Tennessee

Levi Garraway, M.D., Ph.D.

Associate Professor of Medicine, Harvard Medical School, and Assistant Professor of Medicine, Dana-Farber Cancer Institute, Boston

Gad Getz, Ph.D.

Director, Cancer Genome Computational Analysis Group, Broad Institute of MIT and Harvard, Cambridge, Massachusetts

Laurie Glimcher, M.D.

Professor of Medicine and Dean, Weill Cornell Medical College, and Incoming President and CEO, Dana-Farber Cancer Institute, Boston

Lifang Hou, M.D., Ph.D.

Associate Professor of Preventive Medicine, Robert H. Lurie Comprehensive Cancer Center, Northwestern University Feinberg School of Medicine, Chicago

Neal Kassell, M.D.

Professor of Neurosurgery, University of Virginia, Charlottesville

Maria Elena Martinez, Ph.D.

Professor of Family Medicine and Public Health, Reducing Cancer Disparities Program, UC San Diego Moores Cancer Center

Deborah Mayer, Ph.D., R.N.

Professor of Adult and Geriatric Health, University of North Carolina School of Nursing, and Director of Cancer Survivorship, UNC Lineberger Comprehensive Cancer Center, Chapel Hill

Edith Mitchell, M.D., F.A.C.P

Professor of Medical Oncology and Associate Director for Diversity Services, Sidney Kimmel Cancer Center at Thomas Jefferson University, Philadelphia

Augusto Ochoa, M.D.

Professor of Pediatrics and Director, Stanley S. Scott Cancer Center, Louisiana State University, New Orleans

Jennifer Pietenpol, Ph.D.

Professor of Oncology, Professor of Biochemistry, and Director, Vanderbilt-Ingram Cancer Center, Nashville

Angel Pizarro, M.S.E.

Technical Business Development Manager, Amazon Web Services Scientific Computing and Research Computing, Philadelphia

Barbara Rimer, Dr.P.H.

Alumni Distinguished Professor and Dean, University of North Carolina Gillings School of Global Public Health, Chapel Hill

Charles Sawyers, M.D.

Chair, Human Oncology and Pathogenesis Program, Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center, and Investigator, Howard Hughes Medical Institute, New York City

Ellen Sigal, Ph.D.

Founder and Chair, Friends of Cancer Research, Washington, D.C.

Patrick Soon-Shiong, M.B.B.Ch.

Founder, Chair, and CEO, NantWorks LLC, Los Angeles

Chi Van Dang, M.D., Ph.D.

Professor of Medicine and Director, Abramson Cancer Center, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia

Wai-Kwan Alfred Yung, M.D.

Professor of Neuro-Oncology and Chair of Clinical Cancer Care, University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center, Houston

The NCAB will advise the NCI director based on its consideration of the Blue Ribbon Panel's recommendations, expected to be delivered later this summer. A final report by the [White House Cancer Moonshot Task Force](#), chaired by Vice President Biden, will be produced and delivered to President Barack Obama by Dec. 31, 2016.

To meet its milestones, the panel will begin its work immediately, convening its first meeting in the coming weeks. The panel will also consider public comments over the next several months prior to making its recommendations.

Members of the research community and the public can engage in the initiative initially by subscribing to updates on the initiative's main website (www.cancer.gov/moonshot-cancer-initiative) or by emailing the panel at cancerresearch@nih.gov. In addition, an online forum for submitting scientific ideas and comments to the panel will be available on the site in the coming weeks.

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The National Cancer Institute leads the National Cancer Program and the NIH's efforts to dramatically reduce the prevalence of cancer and improve the lives of cancer patients and their families, through research into prevention and cancer biology, the development of new interventions, and the training and mentoring of new researchers. For more information about cancer, please visit the NCI website at <http://www.cancer.gov> or call NCI's Cancer Information Service at 1-800-4-CANCER.

About the National Institutes of Health (NIH): NIH, the nation's medical research agency, includes 27 Institutes and Centers and is a component of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. NIH is the primary federal agency conducting and supporting basic, clinical, and translational medical research, and is investigating the causes, treatments, and cures for both common and rare diseases. For more information about NIH and its programs, visit www.nih.gov.

Related Links

[National Cancer Moonshot Initiative Website](#)

[Blue Ribbon Panel](#)

[NIH Director's Statement: The National Cancer Moonshot Begins to Take Shape](#)

[White House Fact Sheet: Investing in the National Cancer Moonshot](#)