

RECOMMENDATIONS

EVALUATION OF THE CONGRESSIONALLY DIRECTED MEDICAL RESEARCH PROGRAMS REVIEW PROCESS NOVEMBER 2016

RECOMMENDATION

Each CDMRP research program should develop a strategic plan that identifies and evaluates research foci, benchmarks for success, and investment opportunities for 3-5 years into the future. The plan should be re-evaluated and updated as necessary at the end of that interval. Each strategic plan should specify the mission of the program, coordination activities with other organizations, research priorities, how those priorities will be addressed by future award mechanisms, how research outcomes will be tracked, and how the outcomes will inform future research initiatives.

RECOMMENDATION

Where there is a commonality in substantial research efforts by other organizations, whether federal or nongovernmental, CDMRP should have a formal mechanism to coordinate with these entities in a predictable, consistent, and standardized manner each year to learn of substantial or new areas of research on the health condition being funded or considered for funding by those other organizations.

RECOMMENDATION

Stakeholders meetings for each research program should include an opportunity for public engagement prior to, during, and after the meeting, using a variety of mechanisms (e.g., Web-based). Furthermore, such meetings should be held about every 3–5 years, and notices about such meetings should be broadly announced in advance.

RECOMMENDATION

To improve its transparency and business practices, CDMRP should determine how best to obtain the training and evaluation materials used by its contractors so that the materials may be periodically reviewed and revised as needed. Furthermore, at a minimum, CDMRP should establish and make publicly available its qualification criteria for serving as a scientist reviewer—both peer and programmatic—and its conflict of interest policies.

RECOMMENDATION

CDMRP should consistently and publicly identify ad hoc and specialty reviewers as is currently done for peer and programmatic reviewers.

RECOMMENDATION

Applicants whose pre-applications are rejected should receive a standardized statement explaining why. A programmatic review summary that includes more than simply the panel's funding decision should be provided to applicants along with the peer review scores and summary statements. Furthermore, peer reviewers should be informed of which applications were recommended for funding by the programmatic panel.

RECOMMENDATION

CDMRP should consider updating and standardizing its scoring system to reflect current review practices and to reduce confusion among reviewers and applicants.

RECOMMENDATION

CDMRP should have standardized limits on both the terms of service and the number of consecutive terms that peer and programmatic panel members, including chairs, may serve.

