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Zinder Report Asks SVCP To Switch Most Research To Grants, Spread Work Among More Scientists, Change Review Groups

The Special Virus Cancer Program deserves continued support, but drastic revisions should be made in its administration and in the funding mechanisms, the Zinder committee has concluded. The National Cancer Advisory Board agreed with the Zinder report conclusions and appointed a committee of three NCAB members to oversee implementation of its recommendations.

The nine-member committee headed by Norton Zinder was established a year ago by the NCAB and charged with taking a hard, searching look at SVCP as a result of a growing tide of criticism from the scientific community and some from within NCI itself. Zinder, who insisted the committee conducted "a review, not an investigation," held a series of meetings with contractors, NCI staff, and working groups that review SVCP contracts. The committee found:

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IN BRIEF

Anti-Smoking Resolution Lost In White House; Pay Bill Defeat Leaves 73 At The Top In NCI

A RESOLUTION by the National Cancer Advisory Board, pointing to cigarette smoking as a prime factor in the increasing incidence of lung cancer and passed at the board's meeting last November, has been lost or overlooked by the White House. The resolution asked that appropriate publicity be given the board's concern; to date, neither NCI nor the White House (to which the resolution was transmitted) have put out a word about it. The Board decided not to wait for the White House any longer, asked that a press conference be arranged. . . . NCI EXECUTIVES earning the maximum \$36,000 salary permitted civil servants by the President's freeze on the federal salary limit now total 73, including Director Frank Rauscher. The freeze, in effect for the past five years, does not affect the regular in-grade raises, until they reach the maximum. This has created a huge pileup at the top, with subordinates throughout the government earning as much as their bosses. Rauscher says the limit is making it difficult to recruit and keep key people. . . . JAPANESE government has appropriated the money to fund its share of an agreement to exchange data with NCI. . . . VINYL CHLORIDE, in the news as an occupationally-related carcinogen, is released by the breakdown of polymer chloride which is in widespread use in a variety of consumer items. NCI's Umberto Saffiotti reports that the substance has been ordered removed from hair sprays but only the larger manufacturers who are subject to controls are complying. The familiar "new car smell" noticeable in new autos is created by the escape of vinyl chloride from the polymer chloride plastic materials; a spray to simulate the smell is used by some used car dealers.

OMB Cut \$150 Million From NCI Request

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Zinder: SVCP "Full Of Conflicts Of Interest, Lacks Vigor, Has Become An End In Itself"

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—Members of the working groups which review SVCP contracts are generally also recipients of generously funded contracts.

—There is a trend for new members of the working groups to become contractors.

—Until last June, contractors often sat on the same committee which reviewed their own contracts.

—Administratively, its procedures "lack vigor, are apparently attuned to the benefit of staff personnel and are full of conflicts of interest."

—"Because the direct targets have become fuzzy since 1964, although the available funds continued to grow, the program seems to have become an end in itself, its existence justifying its further existence. In doing so, it is eroding what is good in both the grant and contract mechanisms, a fact which may account for the widespread antipathy to SVCP in the scientific community."

The major objections expressed by the report relate to the heavy emphasis on contracts, contract review procedures, and the concentration of the contractual work among a relatively few organizations.

The report noted that in fiscal 1972, NIH awarded \$120 million to support 2,000 grants in the area of virology, of which about \$58 million went to studies related to cancer. NCI support of non-SVCP virology grants was \$7 million, for 100 grants. In that same

NCI Could Spend \$750 Million, But OMB Asks Only For \$600 Million; House Hearing March 27

The Administration's budget request for the cancer program was \$150 million less than NCI told the Office of Management & Budget it needed, *The Cancer Newsletter* has learned. NCI had asked for the full amount authorized in the bill renewing the National Cancer Act, \$750 million for fiscal 1975, but OMB chopped that back to \$600 million in its budget proposal.

In presenting the 1975 HEW budget, Secretary Weinberger tried to make it appear that the Administration was offering a \$100 million increase for cancer over 1974 spending, pointing to his request in the 1974 budget of \$500 million for NCI. However, Congress appropriated \$552 million (reduced by impoundment to \$528 million as agreed upon by the President and Congress). Then, when court actions forced the Administration to release funds impounded from 1973 appropriations, NCI received \$589 million.

NCI Director Rauscher is scheduled to appear before the House HEW Appropriations Subcommittee March 27. The hearing will be open.

year, SVCP distributed \$42 million through 131 contracts.

"Clearly, the SVCP funding of viral oncology overshadows the same area in NCI as a whole and approaches the total NIH effort," the report says. "However, it supports only a small fraction of the relevant scientific community. . . Should this single funding instrument as it currently operates have so large a fraction of the resources that support cancer virology at its disposal? It is the view of this ad hoc committee that the answer to this question is 'No.'"

The report is not critical of the amount of money NCI spends on virology and states clearly that the committee feels those amounts are appropriate. "The scientific rationale for an intensive study of the role of viruses in human cancer is well founded. . ."

The report is not critical of the amount of money NCI spends on virology and states clearly that the committee feels those amounts are appropriate. "The scientific rationale for an intensive study of the role of viruses in human cancer is well founded. . . It is not only the opinion of this committee but of the scientific community at large that a virus etiology for some human cancers is probable."

The report suggests that three features of the SVCP should be retained:

—It should remain an integrated program where communication and collaboration are encouraged between investigators.

—It should continue to provide standardized reagents, viruses, cells and animals in addition to providing certain supportive testing programs for the investigators.

—Much of SVCP's developmental research and clinical and animal screening programs could never compete in the current study sections for funding, but they are absolutely necessary and therefore can only be supported by an integrated program.

The committee recommended for the intramural program:

1. NCAB should appoint a steering committee "to provide overall administrative leadership and guidance" consisting of the segment chairmen and a number of scientists greater than the number of segment chairmen.

2. The Office of Program Resources & Logistics should be maintained as is. Quality control could be improved. Availability of materials and services should be widely advertised and open to the scientific community, and provided on the basis of merit. "No longer should highly qualified scientists be unable to obtain certain reagents simply because they are not in the program."

3. NCI staff should not be put in the "embarrassing if not illegal position of writing contracts for other contractors to support their own work. We do strongly support continuation and strengthening of

the in-house viral oncology program. It should be provided with adequate space, personnel slots and funding."

Recommendations for the extramural program:

1. All working groups should be reconstituted. Each of about five working groups would have a segment chairman salaried by NCI but chosen from the outside scientific community. Current segment chairmen choosing to continue in that role should give up their jobs as in-house program managers.
2. Working groups would consist of more than half non-NCI personnel and initially for the most part of scientists not currently in the SVCP.
3. These groups should have the authority to rate priorities, including refusal or decreased funding of proposals. They should see all submitted proposals and letters of interest and be advised of their fates. There should be no overriding of their decisions without justification.
4. These working groups should participate in program direction as well as consider current proposals. They should have the authority to generate proposals.
5. All current contractors should be notified that their contracts will be terminated over the next three years. A public and widely advertised announcement should be made that the viral oncology program is open to proposals. Current contractors can compete. "What has amounted to almost automatic contract renewal can only have had a stultifying effect on the current contractors, accounting in part for the poor quality of some of the research done to date," the report says. "A little competition should be stimulating."
6. The procedure of inviting the principal investigator or his project officer to present his work should be abolished, leaving more time for deliberation.

NCAB Chairman Jonathan Rhoads appointed Harold Amos to chair the committee that will oversee implementation of the report's recommendations. Frederick Seitz, Irving London and Howard Skipper also will serve on the committee.

Members of Zinder's committee were James Darnell, Vittorio Defendi, Robert Good, Keith Porter, James Price, Wallace Rowe, Aaron Shatkin and Chandler Stetson.

SOURCES SOUGHT

These RFPs will be sent only to organization NCI considers qualified to perform the work described. Submit the indicated number of copies of statement of qualifications to the Contracting Officer.

RFP NCI-CO-45415-06

Title: *Scientific analysis of the National Cancer Program*

Deadline: *April 2, 1974*

NCI is soliciting statements of qualifications from firms, associations, organizations or universities in-

terested in contract support to the office of the associate director for program planning and analysis, in a critical scientific analysis area. Only organizations having the required scientific expertise for this analysis should respond. NCI will carefully review the stated qualifications & interest of the respondents and will subsequently issue a request for proposal to those respondents considered to be qualified. The National Cancer Program Plan (NCP) developed by a joint effort of the scientific community and NCI presents the major national goal, objectives, the major research approaches that should be pursued to attain these objectives and estimates resources necessary to support the research. This Plan will be modified continuously to reflect the latest findings, leads and opportunities. The NCP will provide the framework for the coordination, monitoring and reporting progress of the National Cancer Program.

NCI is seeking scientific analysis support from organizations who can perform scientific reviews and classification of the scientific content of: (1) the NCI intramural, grants and contracts projects, and (2) the on-going scientific cancer related programs of non-NCI supported research and cancer control activities. Qualified organizations must have scientific staff expertise in all aspects of cancer related research, including virology, immunology, chemical carcinogenesis, chemotherapy, epidemiology, molecular biology, biochemistry and other related fields. Gaps in contractor capabilities may be supplemented by consultants as necessary. Analysis criteria for classification of research projects will be furnished to the successful organization by NCI.

Responses should include concise evidence of available personnel and corporate experience. Irrelevant material asserting comprehensive experience or generalities of capabilities are not appropriate. Sales materials, brochures or other like description should not be submitted. Respondents should limit their response to a total of twenty-five pages.

This synopsis is not a request for proposal. Only those sources considered to be fully qualified for this project will be invited to submit proposals. Ten (10) copies of the statement of qualifications should be submitted.

Contracting Officer
Blair Building Room 7A07
Silver Spring, Md. 20910

RFP'S AVAILABLE

Requests for proposal described here pertain to contracts planned for award by the National Cancer Institute, unless otherwise noted. Write to the Contracting Officer or Contract Specialist for copies of the RFP. Some listings will show the phone number of the Contract Specialist, who will respond to questions about the RFP. Contract Sections for the Cause & Prevention and Biology & Diagnosis Divisions are

located at: NCI, Landow Bldg, NIH, Bethesda, Md. 20014; for the Treatment and Control Divisions at NCI, Blair Bldg., 8300 Colesville Rd., Silver Spring, Md. 20910. All requests for copies of RFPs should cite the RFP number. The deadline date shown for each listing is the final day for receipt of the completed proposal unless otherwise indicated.

RFP NCI-CM-43757

Title: Maintenance and operation of the drug distribution system

Deadline: April 29, 1974

Requirements include recording of all data pertaining to the shipment and cost of drugs, maintaining a drug inventory, and producing monthly and quarterly reports from this information. The system is run on-site, using NIH computer facilities (IBM System/360 and System 370 operating under OS/HASP). Programs are written in PL/1, Conversational Programming System, or Inquiry Reporting System. Data Technician and Programming skills required. Preproposal inspection of reports produced to be held 10 to noon, on April 9, Sixth Floor, Blair Building, 8300 Colesville, Md. Five year contract—incrementally funded. Level of effort—approximately 5,752 man hours per year.

Contract Specialist: Thomas J. Whelen
Cancer Treatment
301-496-1891

RFP NCI-CP-T-43314-57

Title: Inhalation bioassay of cigarette smoke in rats

Deadline: May 15, 1974

NCI is interested in establishing a contract to test five types of cigarettes (supplied by NCI) by long-term exposure of rats to cigarette smoke by inhalation; and to assess the further potential of inhalation bioassay in rats.

Contract Specialist: Anna M. Beattie
Cause & Prevention
301-496-1781

CONTRACT AWARDS

Battelle Wins \$3.6 Million Toxicology Studies

Contract; Subcontract Opportunities Available

Battelle Memorial Institute/Battelle Columbus Laboratories has been awarded a two-year contract worth \$3,664,147 to support the Division of Cancer Treatment Experimental Therapeutics Branch in toxicology studies.

NCI said subcontract opportunities exist in standard protocol large animal pre-clinical toxicology

studies; mouse toxicity studies; blood compatibility testing; local tissue reactions; antigenicity studies; and organ specific toxicity studies, especially in the renal and cardiovascular areas.

Organizations interested in subcontracts for this procurement may contact BMI/BCL at the Prime Toxicology Program Office, 7405 Colshire Dr., Suite 220, McLean, Va. 22101.

OTHER AWARDS

Title: Breast cancer detection demonstration project
Contractor: Duke University, \$130,354

SOLE SOURCE

Proposals are listed here for information purposes only. RFPs are not available.

Title: Development and production of oral and parenteral dosage forms

Contractor: Univ. of Tennessee, Memphis (continuation)

Title: Synthesis of potential anticancer agents

Contractor: Stanford Research Institute (continuation)

Title: Analysis of chemical and pharmaceutical formulations

Contractor: Stanford Research Institute (continuation)

Title: Experimental systems for carcinoembryonic antigen

Contractor: Univ. of Kentucky Research Foundation (continuation)

Title: Facility for supplying immune related cell lines

Contractor: Salk Institute for Biological Studies (continuation)

Title: Biological resources management information system support services

Contractor: Wolf Research & Development Corp.

MEETINGS

NCI advisory group meetings frequently are closed, usually for review of contract and grant applications. Time scheduled as open will be shown with each listing, but these sometimes are changed.

Cancer Control Education Review Committee, NIH Bldg 31, conference room 3, March 25, open 8:30 a.m.-10:30.

Breast Cancer Diagnosis Committee, NIH Bldg 31, conference room 2, March 27, open 1 p.m.-3.

American Assn. for Cancer Research annual meeting, Houston, Rice Hotel, March 28-30.

Colon Rectum Cancer Advisory Committee, Houston, Shamrock-Hilton Venetian Room, March 30-31, open March 31, 9 a.m.-12.

The Cancer Newsletter—Editor JERRY D. BOYD

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