

**National Cancer Advisory Board (NCAB)  
*ad hoc* Subcommittee on Global Cancer Research**

**September 1, 2020  
2:15–3:15 p.m. EDT  
Virtual Meeting**

**SUMMARY**

Subcommittee Members

Dr. Francis Ali-Osman, Chair  
Dr. Peter C. Adamson (absent)  
Dr. Deborah Watkins Bruner  
Dr. Yuan Chang (absent)  
Dr. Satish Gopal, Executive Secretary  
Mr. Lawrence Gostin (absent)  
Dr. Scott W. Hiebert (absent)  
Dr. Electra D. Paskett  
Dr. Nancy J. Raab-Traub  
Dr. Margaret R. Spitz  
Dr. Max S. Wicha

Other Participants

Dr. Anna D. Barker, NCAB  
Dr. L. Michelle Bennett, National Cancer  
Institute (NCI)  
Dr. Robert T. Croyle, NCI  
Dr. Kalina Duncan, NCI  
Dr. Howard J. Fingert, NCAB  
Dr. Paulette S. Gray, NCI  
Dr. Nikan Khatibi, NCAB (pending)  
Dr. Douglas R. Lowy, NCI  
Mr. Patrick McGarey, NCI  
Mr. Ricardo Rawle, NCI  
Dr. Norman E. Sharpless, NCI  
Dr. Dinah S. Singer, NCI  
Dr. Sudha Sivaram, NCI  
Dr. Emanuel A. Taylor, NCI  
Dr. Susan Thomas Vadaparampil, NCAB  
Ms. Joy Wiszneauchas, NCI  
  
Dr. Carolyn Fisher, The Scientific Consulting  
Group, Inc., Rapporteur

**Welcome and Opening Remarks**

*Dr. Francis Ali-Osman, Margaret Harris and David Silverman Professor of Neuro-Oncology, Professor Emeritus of Neurosurgery, Duke University Medical School; Dr. Norman E. Sharpless, Director, National Cancer Institute (NCI)*

Dr. Francis Ali-Osman, Subcommittee Chair, welcomed members, participants, and guests to the National Cancer Advisory Board (NCAB) *ad hoc* Subcommittee on Global Cancer Research virtual meeting. He explained that the Subcommittee was established in February 2009 and noted that the mission is threefold, seeking to: (1) advise the NCAB and the NCI Director on strategic approaches and opportunities to enhance the NCI's contribution to global cancer research; (2) provide leadership and expertise with the intention of offering input on proposed initiative(s), concepts, and partnerships or provide information to help determine prioritization of new prospects for the NCI in global cancer research; and (3) search for those opportunities in which the NCI can contribute internationally, such as by advancing clinical cancer research, building and bridging technology and research capacity, or promoting innovative training programs.

Dr. Ali-Osman reported on the Subcommittee's recent activities. In November 2017, the Subcommittee with the NCI convened and charged an *ad hoc* Working Group on Global Health to provide general

guidance to the NCI regarding the future directions of the NCI Center for Global Health (CGH). The Working Group completed its mission and submitted its final report to the NCI on 26 July 2018 in which it outlined key recommendations, a number of which are already being implemented. Beginning in 2019, the Subcommittee assisted the NCI in its recruitment for a CGH Director. As a result of this effort, Dr. Satish Gopal was announced as the new Director in February 2020. Dr. Ali-Osman noted that the Subcommittee will hear updates from the CGH about its programs and new initiatives.

Dr. Norman Sharpless, Director, NCI, welcomed everyone to the virtual meeting of the Global Cancer Research Subcommittee and reflected on the NCI's commitment to support global health. He continues the direction of former NCI Director, Dr. Harold Varmus, guiding the NCI's moral obligation to engage in global health research. Dr. Sharpless welcomed Dr. Gopal to the CGH and Subcommittee and looked forward to hearing the updates.

## **NCI Center for Global Health Update**

### ***Current Status and Future Plans by Director, NCI CGH***

*Dr. Satish Gopal, Director, CGH, NCI*

Dr. Satish Gopal, Director, CGH, provided an update on the current status and plans of the CGH and remarked on its progress in this era of virtual meetings. The CGH was established in 2011 to develop a research strategy to incorporate cancer control into global health programs, foster relevant research activities across the NCI extramural and intramural divisions, and work closely with potential collaborators on shared interests and objectives. Dr. Gopal noted that in 2011 the NCI also established the Provocative Questions Initiative, in which many of the questions addressed were and remain relevant to cancer issues worldwide.

During this transition period of the CGH, Dr. Gopal detailed several objectives that he and his staff plan to accomplish. These objectives were informed by discussions with NCI leadership, as well as CGH staff. The CGH will clarify the mission, vision, and goals for the Center and improve planning and management capabilities and also integration with other NCI divisions, offices, and centers (DCOs). Toward a more scientifically vibrant center, the CGH will recruit a CGH Deputy Director through the Title 42 process, optimize operation and growth of existing staff, and target areas for new recruitment and growth. The CGH resides in the NCI Office of the Director and receives input and guidance from this Subcommittee and other NCI internal committees (e.g., Special Program Leaders). The CGH consists of the Planning, Operations, and Evaluation Branch, which serves the entire CGH and is led by Ms. Cathy Muha; Partnerships and Dissemination Branch, led by Dr. Kalina Duncan; and Public Health, Networks, and Research Branch, led by Dr. Mark Parascandola.

Dr. Gopal informed the Subcommittee of the CGH's refreshed mission, vision, and goals, which align with the Working Group recommendations. The CGH supports the NCI mission by advancing global cancer research and coordinating NCI engagement in global cancer control to reduce worldwide cancer burden through global scientific discovery and dissemination. The work of the CGH is centered on four main goals to: (1) support innovative, impactful research that addresses key scientific issues in global cancer control and/or leverages unique scientific opportunities afforded by global collaboration; (2) support global cancer research training, particularly in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs); (3) promote the integration of current scientific knowledge in global cancer control; and (4) represent the NCI and promote its engagement with key partners in global cancer control.

Dr. Gopal highlighted recent research and training initiatives developed in collaboration with NCI DCOs that have progressed even during the COVID-19 pandemic. The CGH released a request for application (RFA) on tobacco cessation, HIV, and comorbidities in LMICs. The aim is to bring together

transdisciplinary teams to adapt tobacco cessation interventions for persons living with HIV in LMICs. Applications are due 24 September 2020, and the RFA will support four to five U01 awards in FY 2021. A notice of special interest (NOSI)—Dissemination and Implementation Science for Cancer Prevention and Control in Low-Resource Environments—was released. The first Program Announcement with special Receipt, Referral, and/or Review application deadline was 5 June 2020. The CGH issued administrative supplements to support global cancer health disparities research, and the applications were reviewed in FY 2020. A new Common Fund trans-National Institutes of Health (NIH) program on harnessing data science for health discovery and innovation in Africa also was established. The CGH, with participation from the NCI, is coordinating the program's efforts. Applications for the program's various funding opportunities are due between 24 November 2020 and 8 December 2020. A new CGH D43 program on strengthening institutional capacity for conducting global cancer research was launched, and the CGH anticipates supporting up to four awards in FY 2021 and up to three awards in FY 2022. The next application date will occur in FY 2021.

Dr. Gopal highlighted recent partnership and dissemination activities. The CGH is partnering with Project ECHO® (Extension for Community Healthcare Outcomes) at the University of New Mexico Health Sciences Center to coordinate telementoring and implement cancer control plans, which Dr. Duncan will further describe. Dr. Gopal presented some of the recently released findings of the 2018–2019 Global Oncology Survey of NCI-Designated Cancer Centers at the Cancer Center Directors Virtual Annual Meeting on 29 June 2020. The CGH supported and presented at several scientific conferences and meetings, including the American Society of Clinical Oncology (ASCO) Annual Meeting, Academic Global Oncology Meeting, and Annual Symposium on Global Cancer Research. The CGH, in collaboration with the NCI Center for Research Strategy (CRS), also worked with the International Cancer Research Partnership and the International Cancer Screening Network. Dr. Gopal emphasized that the CGH has several partnerships with the Fogarty International Center (FIC) that focus on transdisciplinary research, training, and workshops. The NCI co-funds some of the FIC research and training opportunities

The CGH partnered with the ASCO, American Association for Cancer Research, and Consortium of Universities for Global Health to host the 8<sup>th</sup> Annual Symposium on Global Cancer Research. Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, the symposium was transitioned from an in-person to a virtual meeting, consisting of a webinar series that extended from June 2020 to August 2020. the virtual symposium. The 2021 virtual symposium is planned for March 2021.

Dr. Gopal described his visions for the CGH's second decade (2021–2031), which encompass four key areas of necessity: planning and prioritizing, integrating across the NCI, developing signature initiatives, and improving service capabilities. He reported on plans for a strategy meeting to set priorities for the CGH and would welcome input, including from the NCAB.

### *Discussion*

Dr. Ali-Osman commented on the number of global cancer activities ongoing in the Cancer Centers and the extramural community, including industry and NGOs that the CGH could leverage. Establishing a communication platform to broadly engage global cancer researchers would be productive and effective for all parties.

Dr. Max Wicha inquired on the distribution of time to support Cancer Centers and individuals in global cancer research efforts versus multiple countries and larger aggregates of researchers. Dr. Gopal noted the importance of supporting both domestic and international cancer centers, leveraging existing capabilities and infrastructures to every extent possible. Although most NCI funding and training support the Cancer Centers, mechanisms are in place to assist training in non-NCI-designated centers and also provide other

opportunities. Although the FIC funding mechanisms focus on global health and not specifically cancer, some of those programs successfully invest in young investigators.

Dr. Gopal clarified that the CGH is seeking a Deputy Director with strong global cancer expertise and a clinical, translational background to complement the existing scientific strengths at the CGH. The NCI anticipates posting the position in the coming week.

### ***Cancer and COVID-19 in LMICs: CGH and Partner Activities and Opportunities***

*Dr. Kalina Duncan, Acting Branch Chief, Partnerships and Dissemination Branch, CGH, NCI*

Dr. Duncan presented on the CGH COVID-19 response activities regarding research, partnerships, and dissemination. She noted the broader COVID-19 impact on global health, particularly in increased mortality and morbidities indicated in the modeling studies and in redirected funding and personnel. The World Health Organization reported that cancer care (e.g., screening and prevention) was disrupted in 42 percent of countries responding to the pandemic. LMICs are proportionally affected because of gaps in the health system and infrastructure. The global oncology community is affected, which therefore affects the CGH.

Dr. Duncan detailed the CGH response to COVID-19. In terms of research activities, many of the CGH existing Affordable Cancer Technologies (ACTs) investigators are leveraging platforms in their projects to detect SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19. The CGH is supporting the International Cancer Screening Network to understand COVID-19–related screening impacts worldwide. CGH staff has led authorship on publications addressing biobanking and risks in the COVID-19 era, and the CGH encouraged global oncology-focused applications in support of the NCI NOSI. Aligning with its partnership and dissemination goals to convene and inform experts on cancer control, the CGH coordinated the Project ECHO COVID-19 Africa webinar series addressing palliative care, patients, and stigma. The CGH also is collaborating with The University of New Mexico’s ECHO Institute to host a COVID-19 Global Conversations Series scheduled to begin in September 2020. Within the International Cancer Control Partnership, the CGH contributed to a position statement on the importance of evidence-based national cancer control plans in the COVID-19 era and contributed to establishing a COVID-19 resource library.

Dr. Gopal participated in an interview with governmentCIO’s HealthCast podcast. Dr. Duncan reported that the CGH contributes with the NCI CRS to the International Cancer Research Partnership, which recently conducted an analysis of the COVID-19 impact on income in cancer research funding organizations, and a report will be released soon.

For FY 2021 and beyond, Dr. Duncan pointed out that the CGH will focus some of its efforts on methods to generate evidence to mitigate the effects of COVID-19 future pandemics on people with cancer. Research opportunities will include implementation science, health systems research, data science engineering and physical sciences in oncology, and behavioral science research.

### ***Discussion***

Dr. Ali-Osman commended the CGH for the robustness of its response to COVID-19 and for the breadth of its COVID-19 related activities. In response to a question by Dr. Ali-Osman on appropriating resources and funds for the COVID-19 initiatives, Dr. Duncan explained that the activities she described involved the grantees and are funded through the CGH operating budget. The NCI is supporting the NOSI and related research opportunities.

*Dr. Sudha Sivaram, Program Director, Public Health, Networks, and Research Branch, CGH, NCI*

Dr. Sivaram highlighted the CGH's evolving ideas on a comprehensive global cancer training strategy that spans the NCI and NIH programs. The three areas of focus are to (1) improve global cancer research skills, support global cancer investigators, and build global cancer research environments.

Dr. Ali-Osman asked how the D43 balances training in clinical and translational research in its training activities. Dr. Sivaram explained that the CGH allows the applicant to decide on a topic and/or area of study or training. Dr. Ali-Osman also commented on the opportunity of the CGH to leverage, facilitate and connect basic scientists and clinicians in LMICs who often work in isolation.

## Adjournment

<i>/s/</i>	<b>9/3/2020</b>	<i>/s/</i>	<b>9/4/2020</b>
_____ Dr. Francis Ali-Osman Chair	_____ Date	_____ Dr. Satish Gopal Executive Secretary	_____ Date