

Louisiana Cancer Research Center Board  
of Directors Meeting  
A Hybrid Meeting was held  
On May 30, 2024 @ 3:00pm

The following members of the Board of Directors were in attendance:

**Dr. Richard DiCarlo**, Interim Dean, School of Medicine, LSU Health, Chairman  
**Dr. Lee Hamm**, Senior Vice President & Dean, School of Medicine, Tulane University, Vice Chairman  
**Ms. Barbara Goodson**, Executive Director, Firefighters' Retirement System, Secretary/Treasurer  
**Dr. Patrice Delafontaine**, Executive Dean, School of Medicine, Tulane University  
**Dr. Gene D'Amour**, Special Assistant to the President, Xavier University  
**Dr. Brian Moore**, Director, Ochsner Cancer Institute  
**Ms. Carroll Suggs**  
**Ms. Pamela Ryan**  
**Mr. Darren Mire**, Member, Board of Regents; Director of Valuation, Orleans Parish Assessor's Office  
**Mr. Walter Leger, Jr.**, Senior Partner, Leger & Shaw Attorneys and Counselors

The following members of the Board of Directors were not in attendance.

**Dr. Valentine Nfonsam**, Professor and Chair of Surgery, School of Medicine, LSU Health  
**Mr. Arthur Cooper**, Senior Director, Special Projects, Louisiana Economic Development  
**Mr. Paige Sensenbrenner**, Senior Partner, Adams & Reese, Legal Counsel, LCRC

Also, present were:

Dr. Joe W. Ramos, Director & Chief Executive Officer, LCRC  
Ms. Deborah Reeder, Chief Financial Officer, LCRC  
Mr. Sven Davisson, Chief Administrative Officer, LCRC  
Mr. Ryan Graffagnini, Controller, LCRC  
Dr. Michael Celestin, Director, Tobacco Control Initiative, LSU Health  
Ms. Keadren Green, Sr. Clinical Administrator, Tulane University  
Ms. Seanne Falconer, Executive Director, Tulane Cancer Center  
Ms. Shelina Davis, CEO, LPHI  
Dr. Stefan Grant, Chief, Hematology & Medical Oncology, Director, Tulane Cancer Center, Tulane University  
Dr. Augusto Ochoa, Deputy Director, LSU-LCMC Cancer Center, Chair, Interdisciplinary Oncology, LSU Health  
Dr. Earl Benjamin-Robinson, Director, TFL and COE, LCRC

**Dr. DiCarlo** called the meeting to order. The roll was called and there was a quorum.

**Dr. DiCarlo** requested approval of the minutes of the March 28, 2024, Board meeting.

A motion was made by **Mr. Leger** and seconded by **Dr. Delafontaine**.  
RESOLVED, with all in favor, to approve the minutes of the March 28, 2024, Board meeting.

**Dr. DiCarlo** called for the Finance Committee Reports.

Mr. Ryan Graffagnini presented the FY24 Financial Updates. A copy of the financial report was distributed in the Board binders.

Ms. Reeder provided additional information on a few items from the financial update. The Shared Services budget is fully spent due to this line item containing centralized lab research equipment and maintenance expenditures. The COE office budget is underutilized due to not implementing the software that was initially budgeted. A significant amount of the COE funds come from the Louisiana Dept. of Health and do not automatically carry over. Ms. Goodson is going to assist in trying to get these funds carried over to FY25 in hopes of not losing access to them. The Training and Education budget includes the Summer Programs which will not hit this FY24 expenses but will be in the FY25 budget period. Travel Awards have been granted; however, no expenses have been posted.

Mr. Graffagnini presented proposed revisions to the Policy for Procurement. He stated that the changes are being implemented to be consistent with the State's previous changes. Principally, the changes are to the purchasing threshold amounts, which the State increased.

A motion was made by **Dr. D'Amour** and seconded by **Dr. Delafontaine**.

RESOLVED, with all in favor, to approve the revised LCRC Policy for Procurement

Ms. Reeder presented the agreements that require Board action.

- An agreement between LCRC and Louisiana Community Health Worker Outreach Network, Inc. (LACHON), which is for the recruitment and training of LCRC Community Health Workers.
- An agreement between LCRC and LSU Health, School of Public Health for the Community Nurse Navigators program that will provide navigation services throughout the state of Louisiana.

A motion was made by **Dr. Delafontaine** and seconded by **Ms. Goodson**.

RESOLVED, with all in favor, to approve the agreement between LCRC and the Louisiana Community Health Worker Outreach Network, Inc. (LACHON) for the recruitment and training of Community Health Workers; and to approve the agreement between LCRC and LSU Health School of Public Health for the Community Nurse Navigators program.

**Dr. DiCarlo** called for the Director/CEO Report Dr.

Ramos gave an update on the LCRC including:

Dr. Ramos stated that the highlight of the past few months was the LCRC Scientific Retreat held on May 17, 2024. This was by all accounts a great success. This was the first retreat fully focused on research since before the pandemic. There was a record-setting attendance of around 200 attendees, including faculty and trainees at every level. The program was set by the Program Leads with a series of short talks chosen from the submitted abstracts.

The keynote speaker, Carol Bult, presented a very well-received cross-disciplinary talk called "From Data to Knowledge: Why it Matters to Be Fair." The primary theme was bridging the digital biology divide, and she reflected on the critical role of informatics and computational biology in modern biomedical research, touching on AI and ChatGpt.

It was exciting to bring together cancer-focused researchers from throughout Louisiana for the first time for a scientific retreat focused on the needs of the people of the state to identify ways to prevent, diagnose, treat, and survive cancer.

Dr. Ramos acknowledged Xavier University's great hospitality in hosting and President Verret's warm and inspiring welcome remarks.

The LCRC is in the process of sending out award letters for its first Development funds program. Thirty-five applications were received overall. The LCRC will award 9 Seed grants (for more established investigators), 6 New Investigator grants (for faculty who have yet to obtain their first large extramural grant), and 5 Strategic Investment in Translational Research grants (for senior funded investigators).

The second annual Promising Practices Conference of Community Health will be held next Friday, June 7<sup>th</sup>, and is hosted by Grambling University. The Promising Practices Conference of Community Health is an annual event that is part of the LCRC's community outreach and engagement program. The Conference represents a key step in the COE's mission of engaging with Louisiana communities to improve health and wellness across the state. The Conference also represents a model of COE collaboration with educational institutions and other local organizations to share health and wellness information at a community level and across different communities within Louisiana.

The central objective of the Conference is to increase community awareness of

- Factors related to cancer – with a focus on factors affecting Louisiana communities
- Cancer-related services and programs available to Louisiana communities
- Cancer-related research being done in Louisiana that involves Louisiana communities
- Approaches that can help address cancer within Louisiana communities

These four central objectives support the LCRC COE goal of reducing the impact of cancer across Louisiana and in the Gulf region.

For these reasons, the Conference is about bringing community members, researchers, and stakeholders of healthcare and public health together to

- Listen to and learn from each other about issues relating to community health
- Understand community issues involving health and wellness
- Identify research and research opportunities related to community health and wellness

By discussing these topics, attendees can learn how to more effectively address health and wellness needs in their communities.

Speakers at the Conference include representatives of different research, non-profit, educational, and community organizations from across the state. Conference sessions will allow time for participant discussions and information sharing. They will also allow participants to explore collaborations that can benefit community health and wellness.

Dr. Ramos noted that the LCRC and its partner institutions are in an intense building phase now. That means strategic recruitment, building programs, creating the needed structures and components. This includes improving the work in the clinic and creating the needed processes there to support the LCRC's fantastic clinical faculty and help them do more clinical research.

- Clinical Space growth – UMC and LCRC
- Working with Tulane, Xavier and LSU on recruitments
- Multiple searches are ongoing

To keep you filled in on the many ongoing initiatives, Dr. Ramos asked Sven Davisson to share the minutes from the LCRC Cabinet Meetings, the Senior Leadership Meetings, and the COE meeting via email.

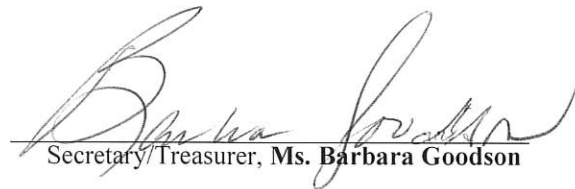
Finally, Dr. Ramos wanted to share with the Board members an example of Louisiana Leading – NCI has modeled a National program – the new NCI Virtual Clinical Trials Office launched in March 2024 on Dr. Ochoa's *Virtual Research Nurse Program* that was launched by the Gulf South NCORP site in New Orleans to address the lack of trained research nurses. Seeing that they gave LCRC credit in the announcement (see the below web share link). You may recall that Jim Doroshov visited LCRC with the First Lady, Mrs. Biden, Senator Cassidy, and Congressman Carter last year, and Mr. Doroshov saw the VRN in action. This is a great example of how innovation in Louisiana can teach NCI a few new tricks.

Website Share (<https://www.cancer.gov/news-events/press-releases/2024/virtual-clinical-trials-office-launches>)

**Dr. DiCarlo** called for any old business. There was none.

**Dr. DiCarlo** called for any new business. There was none.

With no further discussion or business, the meeting adjourned.

  
Secretary/Treasurer, Ms. **Barbara Goodson**