

PROGRAMMATIC SCORING OF APPLICATIONS FOR FUNDING

Background

Under the bylaws of the Grants Working Group, the review of an application occurs in two stages. First, the scientific members of the GWG and the Patient Advocates discuss the scientific merit of applications. The scientific members then score each application for scientific merit. Second, once the scientific preview is complete, the GWG, led by the Vice Chair, who is a Patient Advocate, engages in programmatic review. Programmatic review is a critical part of the initial review by the GWG because it permits members to discuss portfolio issues, including disease type, cell type, therapeutic target, and the risks and potential benefits of proposals. During programmatic review, members may make motions to move an application from one funding category to another, but there is no formal mechanism for scoring applications based on programmatic relevance. Given the importance of programmatic review, the assessment of the programmatic merit of an application should be formalized.

Proposal

Scientific scores are assigned after open discussion with both scientific reviewers and Patient Advocates present; programmatic review should be conducted in the same manner. Specifically, after assignment of scientific scores, the Vice Chair of the GWG should lead a second phase of review with full participation by scientific reviewers and Patient Advocates in order to arrive at scores for programmatic relevance. The GWG would then consider both the scientific score and the programmatic score in determining the overall order of priority for applications. The GWG's recommendations, along with both sets of scores, would be provided to the Board for its consideration.

Justification

As reflected by the inclusion of Patient Advocates as members of the GWG, programmatic review is a critical part of the overall review process. Currently, however, there is no formal mechanism for scoring applications based on programmatic relevance. Formalizing the process to require the scoring of applications on a programmatic basis would provide the GWG and the Board with additional information upon which to make funding determinations.