CIRM
CALIFORNIA INSTITUTE FOR REGENERATIVE MEDICINE

Memorandum

To: Members of the ICOC
From: Gil Sambrano, Vice President, Portfolio Development and Review
Re: Nominations for Appointment of Scientific Members to the Grants Working Group
Date: December 11, 2025

Background
The purpose of the Grants Working Group (GWG) is to provide recommendations to the ICOC regarding the merit and funding of grant and loan applications. The GWG evaluates the merit of applications across all five of CIRM's funding pillars in Discovery, Preclinical, Clinical, Education and Infrastructure. The scope of proposals we receive is very broad ranging from fundamental biology projects to advanced clinical trials across numerous disease areas and fields of study that use stem cell-based approaches, gene therapy and regenerative medicine.

To cover this breadth of expertise, CIRM maintains a large pool of Board-appointed GWG members (currently 264 members) with expertise in many areas including education, fundamental biology, translational research, medicine, product manufacturing, drug development, regulatory affairs, and clinical trials. The pool of Board-appointed GWG members allows us to compose and tailor each review panel to the needs of a specific set of applications.

Appointments to the GWG follow a set of requirements prescribed in Prop 71 and Prop 14 including specific durations (terms) of service. The pool of GWG members is in constant flux due to variable terms of service, changes in members' availability, and also changing expertise needs as scientific fields evolve. As such, we regularly bring for your consideration nominations for the appointment and/or re-appointment of GWG members to maintain a consistently active and relevant pool of experts on hand.

This quarter, we propose to appoint five new GWG members.

We have provided a brief bio of each potential member that provides a summary of their research interests, scientific training, and salient accomplishments.

Requested Action: CIRM requests ICOC approval of the proposed appointments to the GWG.

New Appointments
CIRM is seeking the appointment of the individuals listed below so that they may join the pool of members drawn upon to serve as panelists on GWG reviews. These appointments will strengthen the GWG's expertise across several areas as briefly summarized in the following descriptions.

Dr. Adang is a pediatric neurologist with expertise in translation and gene therapy trials. We are seeing increasing numbers of both PDEV and CLIN2 applications for gene therapy projects in pediatric neurological indications and seeking additional reviewers with similar expertise to cover all the applications.

Dr. Ayasoufi increases our pool of brain cancer disease area specialists, including GBM.

Dr. Bryan is a regulatory expert with considerable FDA experience, including gene therapy and rare diseases. We need additional reviewers with this depth of expertise for CLIN2 reviews to ensure we have sufficient regulatory experts to draw from.

Dr. Eshghi increases our pool of expertise in product development for CRISPR technologies.

Dr. Goldman is a neuro-oncologist with expertise in the role of glia in the pathophysiology of CNS diseases and deep experience in stem cell therapies and translation. He will add to our pool of clinical neuroscientists that can participate in CLIN2 reviews in an area where CIRM continues to see high volumes of applications addressing CNS disorders.

Laura Adang, MD, PhD
Assistant Professor
Division of Child Neurology, Children's Hospital of Philadelphia

Referral: Laura was identified by CIRM Review Team.

Expertise Relevance to CIRM GWG: Laura Adang's expertise in genetic disorders and gene therapy will be invaluable in reviewing Clinical program applications.

Prior Service in CIRM Reviews: NA

Dr. Adang is a physician scientist and child neurologist with subspecialty training in white matter disorders. Her research focus is to develop and validate therapeutic options for children affected by leukodystrophies, a devastating class of disorders with few options. She has worked closely with Dr. Hong and Dr. Ahrens-Nicklas on multiple sulfatase deficiency and the related disorder metachromatic leukodystrophy. Their research program has supported a better understanding of the pathophysiology and natural history of MSD, with identified biomarkers and outcome measures. The proposed work will be of incredible value to the MSD community. Additionally, because of their ongoing natural history study as part of the Global Leukodystrophy Alliance Clinical Trials Network (GLIA-CTN, NCATS U54TR002823) and NICHD grant (NICHD, R21HD106348), they have an active registry to identify potentially eligible patients. They are the recipients of a Bespoke Gene Therapy Consortium (BGTC) award for MSD (multi-PI Adang and Ahrens-Nicklas). The award is a public–private partnership among NIH, the U.S. Food and Drug

Administration (FDA) and pharmaceutical and life sciences companies to build a playbook for rare disease gene therapy. They work closely with the United MSD Foundation, which has contributed funds for subject travel for the Bespoke gene therapy trial. She has spent the last two decades accumulating experiences that allow her to bring a depth of basic science understanding to translational research related to this unique patient population. After completing her PhD in virology, she completed pediatrics residency, child neurology residency, and fellowship training in diseases of white matter at the University of Pennsylvania and the Children's Hospital of Philadelphia (CHOP). She completed a masters in translational research as part of the Perelman School of Medicine at the University of Pennsylvania. With the support of the BESPOKE program and the experienced dedicated team assembled, they will be ready to launch a therapeutic trial targeting MSD.

Katayoun (Kathy) Ayasoufi, PhD
Assistant Professor
Department of Neurosurgery, Duke University

Referral: Kathy was identified by CIRM Review Team.

Expertise Relevance to CIRM GWG: Kathy Ayasoufi's expertise in brain injury and immunosuppression will be invaluable in reviewing Preclinical program applications.

Prior Service in CIRM Reviews: Kathy has participated in Preclinical program reviews.

Dr. Ayasoufi is an assistant professor in the Department of Neurosurgery at Duke University. She joined faculty ranks at Duke in May of 2023. She is a classically trained immunologist. She trained as a transplant immunologist during her PhD studies, and later as a neuro-immunologist during her post-doc training. She has always been fascinated by mechanisms governing multi-system and multi-organ communication. The immune system is distributed throughout the body and affects all biological processes governing health and disease. In her graduate career, she uncovered novel mechanisms of immune-reconstitution following antibody mediated depletion of immune cells in transplant models. During her postdoc career, she investigated mechanisms of immune dysfunction in GBM patients and mouse models. She is interested in studying mechanisms through which insults in one organ, specifically the brain, affect systemic immune responses and lead to transient and long-term multi-organ consequences affecting the health of the entire organism. She likes to call this concept "cross-systems" immunology. Currently, cross-systems immunology is an open niche with many unmet needs. Hence, she would like to fill the gaps through studies that evaluate interactions of various immune cells with their organ of residence and define systemic consequences of cross-systems immunology. Her neuroimmunology lab is focused in cancer immunology, brain cancer biology, immune dysfunction following acute neurological injuries, and brain-immune organ connection.

Wilson Bryan, MD
Independent Regulatory Consultant
Former Director of Center for Biologics Evaluation and Research (CBER)

Referral: Wilson Bryan was identified by CIRM Clinical and Review Teams.

Expertise Relevance to CIRM GWG: Wilson Bryan's expertise in regulatory affairs will be invaluable in reviewing Clinical program applications.

Prior Service in CIRM Reviews: N/A

Wilson Bryan is a neurologist who graduated from the University of Chicago Pritzker School of Medicine. Dr. Bryan served on the neurology faculty of the University of Texas Southwestern Medical School from 1987 – 2000. He was an investigator on clinical trials in cerebrovascular disease and neuromuscular disorders, particularly amyotrophic lateral sclerosis. Dr. Bryan joined the United States Food and Drug Administration (FDA) in 2000. From 2016 until his retirement from FDA in 2023, he served as Director of the Office of Tissues and Advanced Therapies (OTAT) in the FDA's Center for Biologics Evaluation and Research (CBER). OTAT was responsible for the regulation of gene therapies, cellular therapies, genetically-modified cells (e.g., chimeric antigen receptor T cells), tissue-engineered products, plasma protein therapeutics (e.g., immunoglobulins; coagulation factors), selected medical devices, and xenotransplantation, covering a full range of medical indications. Of the thousands of applications in the OTAT portfolio, approximately 50% were for the treatment of rare diseases. Dr. Bryan now works as an independent regulatory consultant.

Shawdee Eshghi, PhD
Vice President of Platform Biology
Deep Genomics

Referral: Shawdee was identified by CIRM Preclinical Team.

Expertise Relevance to CIRM GWG: Shawdee's expertise in gene-modified therapies and CRISPR will be invaluable in reviewing Preclinical program applications.

Prior Service in CIRM Reviews: Shawdee has participated in Preclinical program reviews.

Shawdee Eshghi, PhD, is a biotechnology executive with deep expertise in gene editing, immune cell engineering, and synthetic biology. In her current role as Vice President of Platform Biology at Deep Genomics, she leads oligonucleotide therapeutic programs using AI-driven molecular design. Previously, Shawdee built and led the Genetic Medicine business unit at Ginkgo Bioworks, where she oversaw technical execution across partnered programs in diverse modalities with pharma, biotech and government partners. Technical project areas included serine recombinase discovery, CAR-T molecular design, iPSC engineering, prime editing optimization, and functional genomics. Prior to that, Shawdee developed foundational experience in the development and application of gene editing tools at Caribou Biosciences, contributing to allogeneic cell therapy product development. Shawdee started in industry in the biologics space.

Shawdee completed her postdoctoral training in iPSC engineering at UC Berkeley under David Schaffer. Shawdee received doctoral and undergraduate degrees from MIT in Biological Engineering and Chemical Engineering, respectively.

Steve Goldman, MD, PhD
Professor of Neuroscience and Neurology
Co-Director, Center for Translational Neuromedicine
University of Copenhagen Faculty of Health and Medical Sciences

Referral: Steve Goldman was identified by CIRM Clinical Team.

Expertise Relevance to CIRM GWG: Steve Goldman's expertise in CNS disease will be invaluable in reviewing Clinical program applications.

Prior Service in CIRM Reviews: N/A

Steve Goldman is Professor of Neuroscience and Neurology and co-director of the Center for Translational Neuromedicine at both the University of Rochester Medical Center and the University of Copenhagen in Denmark. In Rochester, he is also the URMC Distinguished Professor of Neuroscience and Dean Zutes Chair in Biology of the Aging Brain, and former chairman of its department of neurology. Goldman graduated summa cum laude from the University of Pennsylvania, did his PhD with Fernando Nottebohm at Rockefeller University, and received his MD from Cornell prior to his internship in medicine and residency in neurology at Cornell-New York Hospital and the Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center. Goldman is interested in cell genesis and regeneration in the adult brain, with a focus on the use of neural and glial progenitor cells in both modeling and treating the neurodegenerative and myelin diseases. His group is especially interested in the contribution of glial pathology to neurological disease, and in the therapeutic potential of glial-directed treatment strategies. He remains active clinically, and is additionally board-certified in neuro-oncology. Goldman has published over 250 papers in his field, and has been awarded over 30 issued US patents, as well as over 100 international filings and issued patents - most directed at the development and use of cellular therapies for brain disease. He is a recipient of the NIH's Jacob Javits Neuroscience Award and the Novo Nordisk Foundation Laureate Award, and has been elected to the National Academy of Inventors, Academia Europaea, the Association of American Physicians, the American Society for Clinical Investigation, and is a Fellow of the American Neurological Association. He has served as a permanent member of the FDA CTAG Advisory Committee, and is a co-founder of CNS2, Inc. and Oscine Corporation. The latter was acquired in 2020 by Sana Biotechnology; Goldman then led Sana's CNS and stem cell therapeutics programs from 2020-24. His current work is supported by NINDS, NIDA, NIA, the Adelson Medical Research Foundation and CNS2, Inc. in the US, and in Denmark by the Olav Thon, Novo Nordisk and Danish National Research Foundations.