



New Jersey Commission on Cancer Research Pediatric Cancer Research Advisory Group April 2022

Introduction:

The New Jersey Pediatric Cancer Research Fund (Fund) was established by P.L. 2021 Chapter 210 and funded in the amount of \$5 million. The administration of the Fund resides under the auspices of the New Jersey Commission on Cancer Research (NJCCR). The NJCCR promotes significant and original research into the causes, prevention, and treatment of cancer and serves as a resource to providers and consumers of cancer services.

Background:

Childhood cancer is the leading cause of death by disease in children under the age of 19 in the U.S. According to the American Cancer Society, about 10,500 children in the U.S. under the age of 15 will be diagnosed with cancer in 2021. Despite major advances – from an overall survival rate of 10 percent just fifty years ago to nearly 90 percent today, survival rates vary depending on the type and stage of cancer. In addition, curative treatment frequently causes side effects, including acute toxicities and organ dysfunction that persists into the survivorship for years.

The National Cancer Institute (NCI) defines cancer health disparities as adverse differences in cancer measures such as number of new cases, number of deaths, cancer-related health complications, survivorship and quality of life after cancer treatment, screening rates, and stage at diagnosis that exist among certain population groups. These disparities in pediatric cancer are complex, multifactorial, and involve social determinants of health. Many factors contribute to childhood cancer disparities. Socioeconomic differences influence the risk factors to which children are exposed as well as their access to quality of medical care, including participation in clinical trials. Other factors may include but are not limited to, genetic and biological factors, environmental factors such as housing, transportation, cultural beliefs, and behavioral (diet, obesity, smoking) factors.

Charge:

To address the many issues surrounding childhood cancer and to facilitate the Fund, the NJCCR established a Pediatric Cancer Research Advisory Group (Advisory Group) to carry out the work and activities on childhood cancer research going forward.

Specifically, the legislative charge of this group is to: solicit and fund scientific research projects that focus on the causes, prevention, education, screening, treatment, or cure of pediatric cancer inclusive of the symptoms, and effects experienced by patients following completion of a course of treatment for pediatric cancer.

Specific Aims:

- Assist with the identification of scientific research projects that focus on the causes, prevention, education, screening, treatment, or cure of pediatric cancer, or the symptoms or effects experienced by patients following completion of a course of treatment for pediatric cancer, and may include, but shall not be limited to, basic, clinical and epidemiologic research.
- Assist with the development of a Request for Application (RFA) on pediatric cancer research.
- Assist with scientific research projects that focus on childhood cancer racial and ethnic disparities.
- Expand the identification of “qualifying research institutions” that perform cancer research in New Jersey.
- Assist with the establishment of a report that includes a summary of the use and impact of funds expended in the prior fiscal year and any recommendations for future initiatives or action regarding pediatric cancer research funding.

Membership:

The NJCCR met in February 2022, to finalize the formation and composition of the Advisory Group, and approve its members: Aubrey Reichard-Eline (Chair), Dr. Cole (Vice-Chair), Dr. Halpern, Dr. Gillio, Dr. Ahmed, Paulette Forbes and Dr. Notterman. The Advisory Group held its first meeting in April 2022, and shall meet quarterly or as needed.