

The CFIDS Association of America

Working to conquer chronic fatigue and immune dysfunction syndrome

September 15, 2010

Wanda K. Jones, Dr.P.H.
Department of Health and Human Services
200 Independence Ave., SW
Room 712E
Washington, DC 20201

Dear Dr. Jones,

The CFIDS Association of America respectfully nominates the following individuals to the Department of Health and Human Services Chronic Fatigue Syndrome Advisory Committee (CFSAC) for terms beginning April 2, 2011. Each of the nominees has given her or his approval for the CFIDS Association to make the nomination.

Roger Dodd, PhD: Dr. Dodd is a widely published and regularly cited expert on blood safety and blood transmissible agents with 40 years' experience with the American Red Cross addressing established and emerging infectious agents. He is a past officer of the American Association of Blood Banks (AABB) and International Society of Blood Transfusion and was appointed to a World Health Organization Expert Advisory Committee on Blood Transfusion. He currently serves as a member of the DHHS Blood XMRV Scientific Research Working Group and the AABB's Interorganizational XMRV Task Force, bringing him into close contact with scientific and communication issues posed by the studies under way to determine the role of murine leukemia viruses in CFS.

Maureen Hanson, PhD: Dr. Hanson is a molecular biologist whose research at Cornell University has focused on gene regulation in mitochondria and chloroplasts. Grants supporting her labs enable the use of state-of-the-art techniques, including PCR, RT-PCR, qRT-PCR, immunoblots, enzyme activity measurement, cloning, protein expression and analysis and high-throughput DNA and cDNA sequencing. From this basis, she has spent the past five years preparing to initiate a CFS research program and has attended several CFS conferences and workshops. Earlier this year she was awarded an R-21 grant from NIH to study the role of gammaretroviruses in CFS. She is working with expert clinician Dr. David S. Bell and has already presented data from a pilot study of CFS patients at the First International XMRV Workshop.

Ian Lipkin, PhD: The Center for Infection and Immunity at Columbia University is dedicated to global research and training programs focused on pathogen surveillance and discovery, and to understanding how gene-environment-timing interactions contribute to health and disease and, as its director, Dr. Lipkin has established himself as a world-recognized authority on these topics. He has been involved in CFS research in the past, when a link to borna disease virus was suspected in the mid-1990s. Over the years he has maintained an interest in "microbial prospecting" in chronic diseases in which individuals might "respond differently to infectious agents based on genetic and epigenetic factors, nutritional status, age, exposure history and simultaneous infectious with other microbes." (Lipkin, 2010)

John Mellors, MD: As chief of the infectious diseases division at University of Pittsburgh, Dr. Mellors directs the primary care and clinical research activities in HIV/AIDS at UPMC Health System, providing care to over 1000 HIV-infected individuals. He has extensive experience with clinical trials of antiretrovirals, including protease inhibitors, triple drug combinations, and combination protease inhibitors. Dr. Mellors' research as an investigator on the Multicenter AIDS Cohort Study has provided insight into the relationship between viral load and disease outcome. His laboratory has focused on the problem of HIV resistance to antiretroviral drugs. His work in this area has helped define the genetic and biochemical basis for HIV resistance. His laboratory developed recombinant retroviral systems to detect drug resistant HIV.

Charles McBrayer Sasser, JD: Mr. Sasser has represented individuals with CFS in disability and employment cases for more than 20 years. He is a past president of the National Organization of Social Security Claimants' Representatives and a former member of the Board of Directors of the CFIDS Association of America. He is extremely knowledgeable about the processes by which disability benefits are evaluated by private insurers and the Social Security Administration and the types of medical evidence that can be helpful to establish disability in these cases.

Ila Singh, MD, PhD: Dr. Singh leads several important research investigations into XMRV in prostate cancer and CFS at the University of Utah and ARUP Laboratories. Working with expert CFS clinician Dr. Lucinda Bateman (a former member of the CFS Advisory Committee), she is testing samples obtained from 105 well-characterized CFS patients and 200 regional matched healthy controls. This study will provide important data about the prevalence of XMRV and other murine leukemia viruses in CFS. Dr. Singh has also conducted experiments testing various agents against these viruses in vitro. She is knowledgeable about the challenges of properly characterizing CFS and detecting emerging pathogens in human disease.

Suzanne Vernon, PhD: For 13 years Dr. Vernon has dedicated her training and talents to applying systems biology based models to the study of CFS, building productive networks of scientists and translating information gained from research to the patient community and other stakeholder groups. She has communicated effectively with funding agencies, the media and policymakers about the challenges and needs of scientists working on CFS and has built a reputation for rigor and credibility. She is the scientific director of the CFIDS Association of America and serves as a member of the Board of Directors of the International Association for CFS/ME. She is also a member of the DHHS Blood XMRV Scientific Research Working Group.

The curricula vitae for the above named nominees are attached as required in the Solicitation for Nominations published in the Federal Register Notice of August 3, 2010. If you have any additional questions, please contact me by telephone at 704-364-0016, ext. 116, fax at 704-365-9755, or e-mail at kim-mccleary@cfids.org.

Sincerely,


K. Kimberly McCleary
President & CEO

Attachment: Curricula Vitae for nominees