Minutes
UW School of Medicine and Public Health
Medical Education and Research Committee (MERC)
October 12, 2009 at 5:00PM – Room 4201 Health Sciences Learning Center

Members Present: Betty Chewning, Marc Drezner, Norm Drinkwater, Susan Goelzer, Robert Lemanske, Pat McBride, Paul Moberg, Rick Moss, Greg Nycz, Tom Oliver, Pat Remington, Rod Welch

Members Absent: Craig Kent

Staff: Chris Blakey, Tonya Mathison, Mike Mirer, Ken Mount, Eileen Smith, Karla Thompson

1. Call meeting to order

Moss called the meeting to order at 5:05pm.

2. Announcements

WPP programmatic audit
A draft report of the programmatic audit of the Wisconsin Partnership Program (WPP) is expected at the end of the year.

Collaborative Health Sciences Program (CHSP)
Expert reviewers are currently independently evaluating the seven CHSP full applications. Those reviews will be followed by a full Review Subcommittee discussion on October 19. The outcome of the meeting will be a ranked list of the applications to be forwarded to MERC for selection of finalists who will be interviewed in January 2010.

SHOW GO grant award
The Survey of the Health of Wisconsin (SHOW), a targeted MERC program, received $5 million in leverage funding through a federal stimulus grant to expand SHOW to focus on disparities in health and lung disease in Wisconsin. The federal grant will also help establish the Network for Health Equality in Wisconsin (NHEW) to identify how changes within the economic, political and social landscape in Wisconsin contribute to major differences in health among state residents.

Graduate Student Project Assistant – Health Communications
Eileen Smith introduced Mike Mirer who recently joined the WPP on a part-time basis as the Health Communications Project Assistant. He is a graduate student in the School of Journalism and Mass Communications.

What Works? Policies and Programs to Improve Wisconsin’s Health
What Works? Policies and Programs to Improve Wisconsin’s Health, a report developed by the Wisconsin Population Health Institute as part of MERC’s targeted grant for Making Wisconsin the Healthiest State, was released in July 2009. The report is a scan of research on the
effectiveness of specific policies and programs affecting the key drivers of health and is a resource for decision-makers as they consider possible actions to improve health in Wisconsin.

The Oversight and Advisory Committee (OAC) is using the report to help develop recommendations for priority setting for future investments. David Kindig is leading a work group focused on identifying a smaller number of potential priorities for consideration by OAC. Moss is participating with a focus on OAC/MERC collaborations.

3. **Approval of September 14, 2009 draft minutes**

Remington moved approval of the draft September 14, 2009 minutes. Drinkwater seconded and the motion was unanimously approved.

4. **Oversight and Advisory Committee report**

Greg Nycz gave an overview of the September 16, 2009 OAC meeting. Val Gilchrist was appointed as OAC’s secretary, replacing Lorraine Lathen who resigned from OAC to lead the Lifecourse Initiative for Healthy Families (LIHF).

Members of the Steering Committee for the LIHF the meeting to provide an overview of the Request for Proposals (RFP) for Community Action Planning Grants. OAC unanimously approved the RFP for release on September 21. Applicants from the targeted communities of Milwaukee, Racine, Beloit and Kenosha will use funds to develop a MCH Life-course Collaborative and to create an action plan to reduce health disparities within the community. $250,000 is available for Milwaukee, and $200,000 each for Beloit, Kenosha and Racine.

Like MERC, OAC is in the early stages of considering the development of a policy related to future distributions from the endowment. Although a specific policy has not been discussed, OAC stressed the importance of developing a uniform policy for the WPP as a whole.

Over $1.3 million was awarded by OAC for six new Community Academic Partnership Fund awards, originally “approved but not funded” in December 2008. A summary of the three implementation and three development grants was distributed. And, following a progress report presentation by Alice Kramer, Project Manager, and Jacquelyn Tillett, Professor of Obstetrics and Gynecology, on the 2007 continuation implementation grant to Aurora Sinai Medical Center for Expanding and Sustaining the ‘Safe Mom, Safe Baby’ Project, OAC awarded funding for the duration of the grant.

5. **Financial planning**

**Consideration of policy on future distributions**

Mount introduced draft general principles for endowment growth and distributions, including an overview of the rate of draw from the endowment if its value increases or decreases, for consideration by MERC. Following discussion, there was general agreement by MERC that a
policy on endowment distributions should ensure overall growth in the value of the endowment with a focus on grant sustainability and advancement of the important stewardship role of the OAC and MERC to allocate funds to improve health in Wisconsin. This discussion will continue over the next couple of months.

**Update on MERC’s projected 2009-2010 budget status**

Thompson presented the financial projections for the Wisconsin Partnership Program through September 2009. The projected value of the endowment of $289 million is almost $8 million above the original gift. MERC’s spendable reserves are projected at over $17 million.

**6. Discussion and decision on reducing budget for prior commitment to fund *Engineering Effective Interventions for Tobacco Use: A Translational Laboratory***

In December 2007, MERC awarded $750,000 over five years to Mike Fiore, Professor of Medicine, contingent upon successful P-50 funding from the National Institutes of Health (NIH) for *Engineering Effective Interventions for Tobacco Use: A Translational Laboratory*. The grant aims to (1) develop treatment packages for clinical intervention in tobacco dependence using innovative research methods; (2) improve the translation of effective tobacco dependence treatments into healthcare settings; and (3) increase adherence to effective tobacco cessation treatments, especially in those populations where tobacco use is increasingly concentrated: poorer, minority and special needs groups.

NIH recently made the $9.3 million award, a reduction of 10.3% from Dr. Fiore’s original request. Following discussion, Remington made a motion to reduce MERC’s award by 10.3% in alignment with the reduction imposed by NIH for a total of $403,650 and to limit funding to three years with funding in years 4 and 5 contingent upon a competitive reapplication. Nycz seconded the motion which was unanimously approved.

**7. Discussion and decision on request for reconsideration of no cost extension for 2007 New Investigator Program grant, *A New Diagnostic Test to Monitor Regression and Recurrence of Epithelial Ovarian Cancer* (Manish Patankar)**

MERC considered additional information provided by Manish Patankar in response to the committee’s September 2009 decision to limit his no cost extension request for the 2007 New Investigator Program grant, *A New Diagnostic Test to Monitor Regression and Recurrence of Epithelial Ovarian Cancer*, to six months with a reduction of 25% of the remaining balance. Following a motion by Goelzer that was seconded by Remington, MERC reaffirmed its original decision with six affirmative and four negative votes. McBride was not present during the vote and Moss abstained as Chair.
8. Review of New Investigator Program grantee final reports

**Topical Honey for Diabetic Foot Ulcers**

Drezner and Lemanske provided an overview of the final report for Jennifer Eddy’s 2005 New Investigator Program award, *Topical Honey for Diabetic Foot Ulcers*. Dr. Eddy made progress in improving the care of diabetic foot ulcers in the community by training a nurse in appropriate care of this disorder and interfacing the nurse in the medical care at a regional health center. Such care is needed and appropriate for management of diabetic foot ulcers. However, there was inadequate data to determine the effectiveness of honey therapy on the ulcerations mostly due to an inability to recruit an adequate number of subjects. The study design was also of concern as it did not group patients based on the severity of their lesions.

The reviewers agreed that implementation of the investigated treatment may be premature as there lacks an evidence-base assuring that honey treatment is the appropriate method for managing diabetic foot ulcers. Drezner moved acceptance of the report with a recommendation that the anonymous review forms be shared with Dr. Eddy, including four follow-up questions for her consideration. Lemanske seconded and the motion was unanimously approved.

**Surface-rendered 3D MRI Overlaid into Live X-Ray Fluoroscopy to Guide Endomyocardial Progenitor Cell Therapy for Recent Myocardial Infarction: Technical Development and Validation Toward Clinical Translation**

Drezner provided an overview of the final report for Amish Raval’s 2006 New Investigator Program award, *Surface-rendered 3D MRI Overlaid into Live X-Ray Fluoroscopy to Guide Endomyocardial Progenitor Cell Therapy for Recent Myocardial Infarction: Technical Development and Validation Toward Clinical Translation*. The reviewers agreed that Dr. Raval made remarkable progress in creating a user-friendly imaging system to guide stem cell delivery to the heart using heart catheters. Remington commented that the summary description is easily understood by a general audience. Nycz moved acceptance of the report. Lemanske seconded and the motion was unanimously approved.

9. Assignment of grantee interim progress and final reports

Eileen Smith will follow-up with several interim progress and final report assignments each to be presented by two MERC members for full committee discussion in November.

10. Adjourn – Next meeting November 9, 2009

Welch moved that the meeting be adjourned. Remington seconded and with a unanimous vote the meeting concluded at 6:40pm.

Recorder, Tonya Mathison