

CABTRAC 2023: Update from the Office of Cancer Centers

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White House Appoints New NCI Director Dr. Monica Bertagnolli



BRIEFING ROOM

President Biden Intends to Appoint Dr.
Monica Bertagnolli as Director of the
National Cancer Institute

AUGUST 10, 2022 • STATEMENTS AND RELEASES



Start Date: October 3, 2022

President Biden Announces Intent to Nominate Dr. Monica Bertagnolli as Director of the National Institutes of Health



**White House Briefing Room
Statements and Releases
May 15, 2023**

CRTEC in Review (as of 10/2023)

Good to Very Good	1	Outstanding to Exceptional	8
Very Good to Good	1	Exceptional to Outstanding	5
Very Good	1	Exceptional	9
Very Good to Excellent	1	72 Center's CRTEC reviewed	
Excellent to Very Good	7		
Excellent	6		
Excellent to Outstanding	8		
Outstanding to Excellent	9		
Outstanding	16		

Strengths Noted by Reviewers:

- **Has comprehensive program encompassing K-12 through physician scientists**
- **Holds substantial training grant portfolio**
- **Leverages collaborations with neighboring institutions**
- **Provides metrics**
- **Has a dedicated office for education and training activities**
- **Includes substantial DEI efforts (Some centers were doing this before the PED component was introduced.)**
- **Have training advisory committees**

Weaknesses Noted by Reviewers:

- **Modest evidence for curricular development for graduate students**
- **Minimal grant writing educational efforts**
- **Limited discussion of alternative career pathways**
- **Mechanisms to ensure equal quality across all sites incompletely developed**
- **Unclear future planning for career enhancement**
- **Insufficient concrete examples of how the E&T office will meet the evolving needs of cancer research**
- **Unclear how junior faculty are mentored beyond institutional efforts**
- **Lack of a centralized process for tracking the progression of trainees**

Plan to Enhance Diversity – Research Strategy

NIH and NCI are committed to ensuring that all Americans share equally in the medical advances that result from cancer research, and that current disparities in the burden of cancer are reduced or eliminated ([NOT-OD-20-031](#)). Diversity creates stronger cancer science and is a critical step in reducing the burden of cancer for an increasingly diverse America. Therefore, the membership and leadership of NCI-designated centers ideally reflects, to the extent possible, the population that the NCI Cancer Centers Program serves – the nation. **Each center may also have special opportunities within its catchment area to enhance the diversity of its staff, membership and leadership.**

NCI recognizes that achieving diversity of membership and leadership of centers will require a long-term commitment on the part of the center, and the center should be evaluated on the efforts undertaken, and the progress made, along the pathway to achieving a membership and leadership that reflects the nation's diversity.

PED: Central Elements

Infrastructure



New Approaches



Culture of DEIA

- Senior Leadership (AD DEI)
- DEI committees, offices
- Formal mentoring for leadership
- Pipeline programs to recruit URM/women to cancer research
- Pilot project funding for URM/women PIs

- Survey of membership
- Liaison with CRTEC and COE
- CC strategic planning
- Leveraging institutional resources
- Evaluation and measurement metrics

- Tangible Results
- Impact on cancer research

PED – Review Trends (as of 10/2023)

- 20 centers

exceptional	
exceptional - outstanding	1
outstanding - exceptional	1
outstanding	1
outstanding - excellent	3
excellent - outstanding	1
excellent	4
excellent – very good	6
very good - excellent	3
very good	

Strengths from PED Reviews

- PED is part of a center's Strategic Plan and aligned with the institutional activities for enhancing diversity.
- There are ongoing efforts to increase diversity of the Senior Leadership and advisory groups (EAB, CAB, etc.)
- Establishing infrastructure with leaders empowered with decision making authority
- Utilize institutional and center resources to support junior to mid-career researchers from underrepresented minorities and women to prepare them for center leadership
- Center's initiatives/activities are intended to encourage participation from diverse groups to expand the pipeline of members at all career levels.
- Partnering with CTREC and COE to increase underrepresented minorities and women in cancer research workforce
- Strong initial baseline assessment and well-developed metrics to evaluate progress; logic models used for evaluation

Weaknesses from PED Reviews

- Under-developed infrastructure - Reviewers expect to see a PED in place – not “we are working on it.”
- Insufficient authorities of DEI leaders
- Beyond institutional practices, there are no specific evaluation metrics to monitor progress of center’s DEI activities.
- Insufficient description of the baseline survey of research workforce, follow-up surveys, and monitoring criteria to guide DEI planning and evaluation
- Limited details for proposed interactions with CRTEC and COE
- If you mention a specific group of concern, for example gender diversity, there should be a plan in place to gather data and set goals

Should Centers be asked to set targets?

NO! The PED requires centers to establish new infrastructure that will facilitate diversity efforts in coming years, but there is no expectation that centers set specific goals or quotas about future diversity, and reviewers should not expect such targets as part of the PED presentation. **In fact, setting targets might be counterproductive, in that it may create a false ceiling to future diversity efforts.**

Reminder: NCI recognizes that achieving diversity of membership and leadership of centers will require a **long-term commitment** on the part of the center, and the center should be evaluated on the **efforts undertaken**, and the **progress made, along the pathway** to achieving a membership and leadership that reflects the nation's diversity.

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) Plan to Enhance Diversity

1. What are NCI's expectations for PED?

That centers should establish the necessary infrastructure and demonstrate the long-term commitment for sustained diversity across the center's membership, leadership, and advisory committees.

2. What does "infrastructure" mean in the PED context?

Dedicated personnel, committees, processes, budget allocation, etc., to support the diversity, equity, inclusion (DEI) initiatives and other related efforts at cancer center.

3. Should a center describe its PED strategy and how it is integrated with institutional strategy?

The cancer center should have a strategy/plan that is clearly cancer-focused and distinct from that of the institution. However, per the NOFO, centers *should leverage institutional commitment and infrastructure to enhance diversity of the center's membership and leadership*. While the center can and should leverage institutional strategies regarding DEI, the PED should be part of the cancer center's strategic plan.

How are states managing policy changes related to DEI?

What about the recent Supreme Court decision?

Statement from the NIH Office of Extramural Research (OER) in Light of the Supreme Court Decision in June 2023

“We are aware of the SCOTUS decision and await further evaluation and interpretation. NIH adheres to federal law and does not make funding decisions based on race. At this time, there are no changes in our policies, processes, or procedures. Applicants are encouraged to consult with their General Counsel to make sure that they are following all applicable laws and regulations.” July 18, 2023

<https://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/pa-files/PAR-21-321.html>

- **Cancer Center Support Grants (CCSGs) for NCI-designated Cancer Centers (P30 Clinical Trial Optional)**
- **Current Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) Number: PAR-21-321**
- **Released: October 12, 2021**
- **First Submissions: January 25, 2022**
- **Expiration Date: January 08, 2025**



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