



**American Brain Foundation  
Research Advisory Committee Meeting  
May 15, 2020**

**3:00 p.m. ET / 2:00 p.m. CT / 1:00 p.m. MT / 12:00 p.m. PT  
Conference Call**

**Meeting Minutes**

**In Attendance:** Robert Griggs, MD, Chair; Raymond Roos, MD, Vice Chair; Carsten Bonnemann, MD; Jose E. Cavazos, MD; Merit Cudkowicz, MD; James Grotta, MD; Mark Mehler, MD; Ralph Sacco, MD; Ira Shoulson, MD; MD; Phyllis C. Zee, MD, PhD; David Dodick, MD; Mary Post, MBA, CAE

**Staff:** Jane Ransom; Julia Miglets-Nelson, PhD

**Excused:** John Morris, MD; Eugene Scharf, MD

The meeting was called to order by Dr. Robert Griggs at 2:08 p.m. CT. The meeting minutes of March 27, 2020 were approved unanimously.

- 1. 2022 CRTF Fundraising:** Dr. Robert Griggs outlined the two major challenges facing the ABF's fundraising for the Next Generation Research Grants (CRTS and CSDA) program. First, that the ABF needs to raise indirect costs from donors who fund the program, and second, that the ABF needs to engage partners who are willing to fund an entire award, or to fund an award in collaboration with another partner to avoid maxing out the ABF's resources.

Jane Ransom explained how a previous CRTS in Parkinson's was jointly funded by the Parkinson's Foundation and AbbVie. The ABF has been hesitant to try to fundraise from Industry out of respect for the AAN's close relationship with Industry, and the ABF would want the AAN's blessing before pursuing any fundraising from Industry. Dr. David Dodick emphasized that the ABF does not want to interfere with the AAN's funding.

Mary Post agreed to review the status of AAN and ABF relationships with Industry fundraising with Kris Fridgen and follow up with Jane Ransom.

Dr. Merit Cudkowicz suggested that the ABF could approach Industry foundations like those at Biogen and Sanofi to avoid fundraising from the same sources within these companies as the AAN. Dr. Raymond Roos noted that AbbVie and Biogen have given large research grants recently. Dr. Jose E. Cavazos highlighted that Industry frequently partners with the NIH to fund fellowships. Dr. Phyllis C. Zee noted that societies like the Sleep Research Society may be interested in partnerships with the ABF.

2. **Crowdfunding Update:** Julia Miglets-Nelson reported that the ABF is pausing the crowdfunding program for 2020 due to COVID-19 and the need for a public awareness campaign that will create the base of support needed to make the program successful.
3. **COVID-19:** Dr. James Grotta outlined the need for research funding around the neurologic implications of COVID-19 and the ABF's progress to date. A subcommittee of the Research Strategy Task Force has met twice. The plan is to partner with the AAN, and to find a large donor or two to jump start progress. Jane Ransom added that the ABF plans to fund two types of awards, including seed grants in the \$50,000-100,000 range to established researchers, and Practice Research Training Scholarships for early career researchers engaged in health policy research to study how to get treatments for the neurologic implications of COVID-19 to communities of color and underserved communities.

Dr. David Dodick shared that a pharmaceutical company had reached out to him to get an opinion on the need for an international registry as it relates to COVID-19 and the brain and nervous system. At that time, Dr. Dodick raised the possibility of a research fund through the ABF and AAN, which seemed to interest the pharmaceutical company, however it has not gone further than this conversation because the ABF does not have the green light from the AAN to raise funds from industry.

Jane Ransom reported that the ABF staff have met with the AAN research program staff about the proposed project. Dr. Natalia Rost and Dr. Paul George have indicated that the AAN is interested in collaborating with the ABF.

Dr. Merit Cudkowicz and Dr. James Grotta proposed that the ABF consider collaborating with federal funders like the NIH. Dr. Ralph Sacco reported that the American Heart Association released an RFA for \$100,000 grants for COVID-19 research and received 750 applications for 20 awards.

Dr. Robert Griggs explained that Dr. David Dodick has established a task force around funding for COVID-19 and the brain and that the ABF staff will take these ideas back to the task force.

**Adjourned 2:59 p.m. CT.**