

**Maryland Pediatric Cancer Research Commission**  
Meeting 1 | May 1, 2025 | Time 3:00 p.m. - 4:30 p.m.  
Virtual Meeting

**MEETING MINUTES**

**Attendees:**

**Members Present**

Elizabeth Kromm  
Dana Christo  
Ruth Hoffman  
Kathryn Ruble  
Beth Siever  
Dr. John Shern  
Piotr Walczak  
Curt Civin  
Aziza Shad  
Donald Small  
Jeffrey Dome

**Maryland Department of Health Staff Present**

Jody Sheely  
Katherine Natafji  
Ken Lin Tai  
Megan Sehr  
Tyra Hudgens  
Sadie Peters

**Members of the Public/Presenters Present**

Pansy Watson

Sadie Peters, Medical Director of the Maryland Department of Health's (MDH) Center for Cancer Prevention and Control convened the meeting at 3:06 p.m. Dr. Peters notified attendees that the meeting was being recorded.

**1. Welcome and Introductions**

Dr. Peters reviewed the meeting agenda and called roll. Eleven members were present. Staff from the Maryland State Ethics Commission and MDH introduced themselves. No members of the public were present.

**2. Orientation**

Dr. Peters presented information about Maryland's Open Meetings Act. The Commission is subject to Maryland's Open Meetings Act (OMA), which requires public meetings, advance notice of meetings, and public access to minutes and certain records. Meeting

dates, agendas, and minutes will be posted on the Commission's new [webpage](#). A quorum of at least seven members is required for decision-making based on the size of the Commission. While the group may operate by consensus, formal votes must be taken and recorded for major decisions, with only members allowed to vote. Meetings will be recorded via written minutes, minutes must be formally adopted, and public comment may be permitted at the chair's discretion.

### **3. Overview of SB13/HB51 and History of the Commission**

Dr. Peters reviewed relevant statutes.

In 2022, Health-General Article, §20-120, HB 775/SB 51 established the Maryland Pediatric Cancer Fund to provide grants for pediatric cancer research by physicians, hospitals, laboratories, educational institutions, and other organizations and persons.

In 2024, SB13/HB52 established the Maryland Pediatric Cancer Research Commission to oversee the award of competitive grants from the Maryland Pediatric Cancer Fund.

### **4. Purpose of the Commission:**

Dr. Peters discussed the purpose of the Commission as summarized in the statute. The Commission is to:

- a. develop criteria, standards, and requirements for the review of applications for pediatric cancer research grants from the Pediatric Cancer Fund
- b. establish procedures and guidelines for the review, evaluation, ranking, and rating of the research grant proposals
- c. develop criteria and a process for reviewing grant applications to ensure that each application is complete and satisfies the criteria, standards, and requirements developed by the Commission
- d. develop disclosure and recusal guidelines to be followed by members of the Commission when considering grant applications
- e. establish standards for the oversight of awards, and
- f. conduct progress reviews of grant recipients

### **5. Draft Charter**

Dr. Peters discussed that a draft charter will be developed by MDH staff and circulated to commission members for review and further discussion during the next meetings.

- a. General operating requirements:
  - i. Members select a Chair and Vice Chair annually from among its members
  - ii. Meetings must be conducted according to the Open Meetings Acts Manual
  - iii. Commission must meet at least twice a year
  - iv. Commission meetings must open to the general public, but members of the public may not vote
  - v. Decisions shall be made by the commission by a majority of the quorum (7 members) present and voting.
  - vi. Subcommittees or ad-hoc groups may be created to study and report on topics relating to pediatric cancer research proposals and grants.

- vii. The Commission will seek assistance from independent subject matter experts to evaluate the proposals received.
- b. Member Roles and Expectations (not present in statute)
  - i. Attend meetings regularly and actively contribute knowledge and expertise,
  - ii. Attend at minimum 75% of the meetings and miss no more than 2 consecutive meetings,
  - iii. Read meeting minutes and other provided documents,
  - iv. Read assigned independent evaluators' recommendations in preparation for meeting discussions,
  - v. Assist with scheduling of meetings by providing availability,
  - vi. Contribute to research and semi-annual report writing as assigned by the Chair, and
  - vii. Complete subcommittee assignments as directed.

## **6. Ethics Training**

Pansy Watson, Assistant Counsel for the State Ethics Commission provided an overview of the Maryland Ethics Commission and addressed potential conflicts of interest that members of the Maryland Pediatric Cancer Research Commission may encounter.

There are six primary areas of conflict of interest to be aware of: participation, outside employment/financial interests, post-employment activities, gifts, prestige, and confidential information. As the commission will be reviewing grants within a small and interconnected research community, participation is a particularly important area to monitor. Members should also be well-versed in the rules regarding gifts and the use of their position's prestige. Public officials and employees are prohibited from participating in matters where they or a qualifying relative have a personal interest.

Commission members in Maryland are required to file an Annual Financial Disclosure electronically, in accordance with state ethics law. New members must file within 30 days of their appointment, annual filers must submit by April 30, and an end-of-service statement is required within 60 days of leaving the position.

## **7. Regulations**

Tyra Hudgens from the MDH Office of Support Services gave an overview of Maryland's regulatory promulgation process, which takes about 4–6 months. She explained that state agencies create regulations to implement laws passed by the General Assembly, and these regulations are typically more detailed than statutes. The presentation provided background on what regulations are and how the process works, in preparation for the Commission's role related to the Pediatric Cancer Fund.

## **8. Next Steps**

- a. Meeting Cadence and Scheduling
  - i. Dr. Peters encouraged Commission members to respond to Doodle polls to establish the second and third meetings of this Commission.

- ii. Thursdays at 3:00 PM was a popular time in an informal poll of the Commission.
- b. Nominations for Chair and Vice Chair
  - i. Dr. Peters provided an overview of the responsibilities and requirements of the chair and vice chair positions.
  - ii. MDH staff will circulate information about the responsibilities of the chair position to Commission members for review and consideration. Interested Commission members are advised to volunteer for the position so the Commission can vote in the next meeting.

**9. Public Comment**

No comments were received from the public.

**10. Adjournment**

Dr. Peters adjourned the meeting at 4:31 PM