



Commonwealth Neurotrauma Initiative (CNI) Trust Fund Advisory Board

Meeting Minutes * March 15, 2024 * 9:00 a.m. to 10:20 a.m.

Members participating In Person

- Richard Bagby (Chair), Executive Director, United Spinal Association of Virginia
- Kathryn Hayfield, Commissioner, DARS
- Heather Funkhouser Board, Virginia Department of Health
- Joshua Sloan, Bankruptcy Analyst, Truist
- David Reid, PsyD, Neuropsychologist, Augusta Health

Members participating Virtually

- David Cifu, MD (Chair), VCU Department of PM&R

Members not present

- Raighne (Renny) Delaney, JD, Bean, Kinney & Korman PC

Staff

- Jacole Thomas (staff), CNI Trust Fund Program Specialist, DARS Brain Injury Services Coordination Unit

Guests

- Carolyn Turner, Director, DARS Office of Disability Programs

Welcome and Introductions

Richard Bagby, (chair) called the meeting to order and roll call was taken. This was an in-person meeting with one virtual attendee and quorum was achieved.

Public Comment Period

No public comments.

Approval and Adoption

By unanimous vote the following items were approved without changes:

- Approval of the December 8, 2023 meeting meetings
- Adoption of the February 2, 2024 meeting agenda
- Approval of February 2, 2024 meeting minutes
- Adoption of the February 9, 2024 meeting agenda
- Approval of February 9, 2024 meeting minutes
- Adoption of March 15, 2024 meeting agenda

RFA Update

The CNI Advisory Board staff member advised the Board that contracts went out on March 14, 2024 for signature. However an adjustment needed to be made to the disbursement schedule of three out of the four contracts. Procurement has the adjustment and those adjusted contracts should be re-submitted to the awardees March 15, 2024

The awardees were announced as follows:

Sportable	3 years	\$450,000.00
Sheltering Arms Institute	2 years	\$275,449.96
VCU_Karmarkar	3 years	\$413,086.00
Healing Sounds	3 years	\$407,760.00

Financial Report

The CNI staff member presented the SFY Quarter 2 financial report, building upon the SFY Quarter 1 report previously shared. This report was sourced from the Trial Balance Report, which does not deduct expenditures from the Ending Balance on a monthly basis. The staff member noted that further investigation would be undertaken to determine why the Trial Balance Report does not reflect the true balance monthly. In the meantime, CNI staff will continue maintaining a separate spreadsheet to track the ending balance after deducting expenditures. The commissioner expressed a preference for seeing the ending balance adjusted for expenditures, a detail not provided by the Trial Balance Report.

SFY24 Quarter 1

	July 2023	August 2023	September 2023
Beginning Balance	3,022,652.66	3,082,322.66	3,137,497.66
Revenue	59,670.00	55,175.00	59,950.00
Grant Payments	214,053.25	0.00	2,644.82
Expenses	3,611.17	3,785.80	3,129.76
Ending Balance	3,082,322.66	3,137,497.66	3,197,447.66

SFY24 Quarter 2

	October 2023	November 2023	December 2023
Beginning Balance	3,197,447.66	3,278,736.50	3,336,153.63
Revenue	50,375.00	57,417.13	48,565.00
Interest	30,913.84	0.00	0.00
Grant Payments	214,029.50	0.00	5000.00
Expenses	1,908.61	8,872.31	5,478.22
Ending Balance	3,278,736.50	3,336,153.63	3,384,718.63

CNI Update:

Four grants are coming to an end September 30, 2024. They are Sportable, VCU_Karmarkar, VCU_Ottens and VCU_Peterson (CTR015716 formerly A262-90012).

1. **VCU Peterson** - The project aims to create a home-based rehabilitation program targeting the enhancement of upper limb function in individuals with cervical spinal cord injury (SCI). Zina Trost, the Co-PI associated with the VCU_Peterson grant, has relocated from VCU to Texas A&M. The grantee expressed interest in establishing a subaward. Initially, on September 20, 2023, the grantee received the following response: "Thank you for your question. As noted in the original contract for 262-90012, now CTR015716:" PROPOSAL PREPARATION AND SUBMISSION INSTRUCTIONS

- A. Mandatory Specifications:

- J. Funds shall be awarded only to Virginia-based organizations, institutions, and researchers, per Commonwealth of Virginia regulations [22VAC30-50-20].

Due to this legal requirement a subaward would not be permitted to Texas A & M University. How does this impact the remaining project?

Updated DARS guidance received on October 10, 2023 suggests: If VCU pays Zina Trost to complete the analysis of this project, 1. VCU would need to ensure DARS that the actual research/services were completed for Virginia; 2. There is still a lead in Virginia on this project, overseeing the actual grant; and 3. This will allow the project to be completed by the end of the grant (September 30, 2024).

Dr. Cifu is going to look into this from VCU's end as an update has not been received from Dr. Peterson.

2. **VCU Karmarkar** - "Transitions and Disparities in Care and Outcomes (TDCO) for Neurotrauma. For the reporting period, have completed 3 out of 4 aims using Virginia All-Payer Claims Data from 2017-2021. In addition, based on the feedback that we got during our last Consumer Advisory Committee meeting, we analyzed Medicare data for the years 2017-20f18 for validation purposes. Dr. Karmarkar has recently been invited from Brain Injury Association of America (BIAA) to do a webinar on this project's findings. The webinar is scheduled for March 21, 2024 at 3 p.m. This webinar will have a co-presenter from DARS who will talk about the project findings in developing and implementing targeted state programs for enhancing care transitions among individuals with TBI and SCI.
3. **VCU Ottens** The Biofluid Peptidome for Novel Diagnostic and Prognostic Facilitation of TBI Care. We have made progress on our objectives in the last 7 months towards meeting expected performance goals. Moreover, we presented our findings for Objective 1 at the Neuroscience 2023 (the annual meeting of the Society for Neuroscience) in Washington DC this past November, both as a virtual talk and poster entitled "Predicting clinically relevant elevations in intracranial pressure using the circulating peptidome of brain injured patients". Moreover, we have successfully recruited 10 new patients this past cycle into the study and have collected serum / urine matched specimens at 24, 48 and 72 h post injury from each of these patients to amplify our ability to validate our injury monitoring model in serum and urine.

4. **Sportable - Developing and Testing the Efficacy of Targeted Wellness Training in Children and Adults with SCI, TBI and other Trauma-related Disabilities Participating in a Recreational Sports Program** Objective: To develop and feasibility test a disability-specific wellness program and to investigate the actual added value and effectiveness of this directed and individualized wellness training on individuals with physical disabilities who are participating in structured, recreational sports programs. Research Update: During this quarter, we were notified by Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU) that our IRB submission for our research phase of this project would not be approved. At the recommendation of the CNI Advisory Board, we are planning to continue this project as a Program Evaluation

CNI staff member presented Sportable's project, progress and budget and request for a variance to the program. VCU's Institutional Review Board (IRB) denied Sportable's research submission.

Sportable will be unable to conduct Phase II of their project and is requesting to continue with Phase I with a goal to increase capacity by about twenty more participants until the end of the grant period. The Board voted and approved the Variance. CNI staff member will be seeking further guidance on whether this constitutes a modification from Procurement as the Board members thought that it does not.

Advisory Board Vacancies

David Cifu currently serves as the “individual licensed to practice medicine in Virginia experienced with brain or spinal cord injury,” while Renny Delaney represents “Virginians with traumatic brain injury or caretakers thereof.” Both individuals' terms are set to expire in June 2024, and neither will seek re-election as they have completed their second terms.

Available positions July 2024:

- One person licensed to practice medicine in Virginia experienced with brain or spinal cord injury
- One Virginian with traumatic spinal cord injury or a caretaker thereof

HOW TO APPLY

To apply for these positions, interested individuals can visit the website of the Commonwealth of Virginia's Boards and Commissions at <https://www.commonwealth.virginia.gov/va-government/boards-and-commissions/>. There, they can review the current list of vacancies and submit an application. It's noted that two applications have been received so far.

The Board briefly discussed the process of seeking approval from the Secretary's Office to add additional Board Members, indicating a potential intention to expand the Board's composition.

Now that it's 2024

A. Ideas that were discussed for CNI in 2024:

- Increasing the number of applications received.
- Enhancing visibility of CNI
- Strengthening networking efforts
- Maintaining decision-making authority regarding Requests for Applications (RFA).
- Expanding outreach efforts to various regions of the state.
- Launching a marketing campaign to showcase outcomes produced from allocated funds.
- Developing CNI-specific marketing materials, highlighting funding opportunities for non-profits and research endeavors. (does your non-profit need funding? Do you need research funds?)
- CNI booth at SCI/TBI symposiums

B. The Board requested changing the June 21, 2024 meeting from virtual to in-person.

Other Business

- A. Richard Bagby(Chair) proposed moving CNI meetings to 10:00 a.m., which was unanimously agreed upon by the Board.
- B. Kathy Hayfield highlighted new legislation regarding virtual participation in meetings for designated caregivers, as outlined in HB 1040 of the Virginia Freedom of Information Act. This legislation allows remote participation to count towards meeting quorum requirements.

SUMMARY AS PASSED:

Virginia Freedom of Information Act; definition of "caregiver"; remote participation in meetings by persons with disabilities and caregivers; remote voting. Provides that for purposes of determining whether a quorum is physically assembled, an individual member of a public body who is a person with a disability or a caregiver, defined in the bill, and uses remote participation counts toward the quorum as if the individual was physically present. The bill also provides that the participation policy adopted by a public body, as required by the Virginia Freedom of Information Act, shall not prohibit or restrict any individual member of a public body who is participating in an all-virtual meeting or who is using remote participation from voting on matters before the public body. As introduced, the bill was a recommendation of the Virginia Freedom of Information Advisory Council. This bill is identical to [SB 85](#).

<https://lis.virginia.gov/cgi-bin/legp604.exe?241+sum+HB1040S>

- C. David Reid updated everyone that he is now with Augusta Health and Augusta Psychological Associates can be removed from his title.
- D. Next CNI Board meeting will be in-person with a virtual component on Friday June 21 at 10:00 p.m.

Adjourn

The Chair adjourned the meeting at 10:20 a.m.