

**WA Health Translation Network**  
**Research Collaboration to COVID-19**  
**Advisory Group**  
**Minutes**  
**Thursday 24 April 2020, 3.00pm – 4.00pm**  
**Via Zoom**

Attendees: Gary Geelhoed, Daniel Fatovich, Darren Gibson, Merrilee Needham, Graham Hillis, Catherine Elliott, Jon Watson, Jim Flexman, Stephen Stick, Chris Reid, Toby Richards, Jeremy Nicholson, Aron Chakera, Debbie Turner.

**1. Welcome and update**

Gary Geelhoed commented that with the flattening of the curve and the relatively low number of cases the approach to both research and the attitude of potential donors were changing.

- ***Guiding document***

Gary Geelhoed reminded the Advisory Group to provide feedback to the guiding document. In addition, it is on the website.

- ***Department of Health Research Proposal Decisions***

Over 80 proposals were received for the Research Grants. The panel reviewed the applications on 16 April. The WA Minister for Health will announce the outcomes shortly.

- ***New Directions***

***MfH Community Study***

The WA Minister of Health had a radio interview today which discussed a community study. Subsequent to this, a group have met to put together proposals to what that might mean for additional collaborative opportunities. Peter Leedman will present to the larger COVID-19 Research Collaboration group next week.

Darren Gibson mentioned that the Commonwealth Government are looking for an Australian site for the WHO Solidarity trial. WA was approached first. There is potential for overlap with REMAP-CAP, and further information on this will be provided.

***Immunology Group***

A meeting is scheduled next week with key immunologists to discuss the challenges going forward to extricate ourselves from the COVID-19 crisis, particularly after the potential ease off social restrictions. Broader discussions will be held to flesh out additional information. Further details to follow once the group has met.

***Viral mutations***

Looking at China and whether the virus is changing. Raises the possibility that in WA we may have done well because of early action but also a milder strain of virus.

Jim Flexman mentioned there are multiple strains emerging. Mutations can affect different sites and PathWest are monitoring this.

Stephen Stick mentioned that the Telethon Kids Institute have conducted analysis and it appears to be relatively stable at the moment.

Meetings will be held next week and Gary Geelhoed will report on the outcomes to the various committees.

## 2. Funding

Peter Klinken has secured additional funding for research proposals which will be announced in due course.

A meeting is scheduled with HBF next week regarding possible private health involvement.

## 3. Updates from Key Areas

- ***PathWest (Jim Flexman)***

A document has been developed which outlines the PathWest requirements in relation to the transfer of samples into the biobank. The document will be circulated to members of the Advisory Group.

There are a number of concerns with regards to governance and specimen transfer. PathWest are facilitating this to streamline the process. A meeting to sort through the governance concerns will be scheduled for next week.

- ***South Metro Health Service (Toby Richards)***

Protocols are set up and currently are awaiting full governance sign off from the sponsor.

186 patient samples collected to date.

Completed feasibility and testing phase setting up the protocol in SMHS on south; data sample collection commenced in the EMHS this week; and a team has started setting up a template at NHMS.

Toby Richards mentioned that a meeting with the Research Directors from NMHS, SMHS and EMHS will be scheduled to work out what the initial questions are currently with regards to COVID-19 in WA at this point in time to develop quick wins. Make samples available to the State to show outputs.

- ***North Metro Health Service (Aron Chakera)***

Governance issues still need to be sorted.

- **East Metro Health Service (Daniel Fatovich)**

Signed up 6 patients for the ISARIC protocol.

- **Telethon Kids Institute (Stephen Stick)**

Emphasis is currently on averting outbreaks as they occur as quickly as possible to reduce viral shedding in index cases within the community and prevent transmissions through households using interferon. Funding has been received. Households would then be randomised to receive treatment.

- **University of Western Australia (Jon Watson)**

The REDCAP server capabilities are progressing.

- **Australian National Phenome Centre (Jeremy Nicholson)**

Jeremy Nicholson is continuing to pursue the international connections and met with an international group with over 30 different groups who similar instrumentation to the ANPC and have COVID-19 samples in their labs already.

ANPC is assisting to coordinate the international metabolic phenotyping approach.

If key groups are not on REDCAP, what is the minimum amount of clinical metadata that allows you to co-analyse information between different databases?

#### 4. **Media release and appearances**

A West Australian article highlighted the work of the ANPC, CRR and WAHTN. Toby Richards noted that the intention is to have a unified approach with regards to media.

Gary Geelhoed advised that this article, along with all interviews that have been conducted and stated that all media have been uploaded to the WAHTN website:

<https://www.wahtn.org/wa-covid-19-research-collaboration/>

#### 5. **Next Meeting**

A meeting of the Advisory Group will be scheduled for Thursday 30 April.