

Subject: Moving Forward on Clinical Research
From: "Frank B. Cerra" <ahccomm@tc.umn.edu>
Date: Wed, 2 Apr 2008 10:14:27 -0500
To: ALL-AHC-ALL@oris.AHC.UMN.EDU

Dear colleague,

Our mission within the health sciences is dependent on our capacity to perform clinical research. The promise of health improvement that is based on our strength in basic sciences and excellence in translational science is dependent on an efficient and effective clinical research program that is partnered with a community network. And here, at the University, our Office of Clinical Research (OCR), with the promise of an NIH Clinical and Translational Science Award (CTSA), are two key pieces of that capacity.

I have spent considerable time over the past few weeks meeting with key leaders, faculty, Dean Powell, and Dr. Ahluwalia to assess where we are and what we need to do to ensure a strong future for OCR, and success with the CTSA. I want to thank Dr. Ahluwalia and all involved in the consolidation and integration of clinical research activities into the OCR in the past few years. Your work will serve us well.

What's now clear is that OCR, with the CTSA, essentially will provide a service platform for the performance of clinical research that is partnered with a community network. This platform will provide for disciplinary advancement, as well as a strong interdisciplinary emphasis critical for the future. We will need all of our collective skills, expertise, and energy to achieve the successful award of the CTSA, allowing us to expand our capacity to perform critical clinical research partnered with a community network.

To achieve this goal, we are moving ahead with new leadership and a new approach.

-- Later this week, I plan to announce a new interim director of the OCR who will work with me to review current programs and services to ensure we're on track to become integrated with the CTSA effort.

-- We will develop a core theme for the CTSA that leverages the University's strengths, as well as those of the AHC and community.

-- We will seek a theme that adds clear value to the existing national CTSA network, and one that is transformative and adds value for this University.

-- The grant will be written to this theme, utilizing much of the hard work that is reflected in the current application, based on information from the NIH pink sheets that should arrive by mid-April.

-- This week, I will appoint a focused core faculty group to develop the theme and coordinate writing of the integrated resubmission for the October 2008 deadline.

-- The principal lead in this group will be a senior, accomplished translational scientist, with a co-lead representing community leadership and expertise in networking and community research.

-- A Deans group will assist the core faculty group in developing the theme, core strengths to fit the theme, and the service platform to facilitate the performance of clinical research.

-- Finally, I will appoint a group of senior faculty to provide a broader, strategic perspective to this effort, and to advise on the theme selections and strengths for the re-submission. There also will be a need for external engagement in the development of the community interface.

I am now in the process of appointing the faculty and staff to this process, and hope to share those names with you by the end of this week. As always, my e-mail is secure, and I welcome your comments and suggestions at cerra001@umn.edu

Frank B. Cerra, M.D.
Senior Vice President for Health Sciences
McKnight Presidential Leadership Chair