



MEETING SUMMARY

Studying PCORI's Patient-Centered Approach

A Workgroup of PCORI's Advisory Panel on Patient Engagement (PEAP)

August 11, 2020

OVERVIEW

The PEAP Studying PCORI's **P**atient-**C**entered **A**pproach (PCA) Workgroup meeting on August 11, 2020, focused on a PCORI staff-led project to evaluate PCORI's merit review process (i.e., the process by which scientist, patient, and stakeholder reviewers assess PCORI research applications and inform decisions about which research projects are funded). PCORI's merit review process is designed to ensure that we fund research that is scientifically rigorous and patient centered. As a learning organization, we seek to evaluate our merit review process to make sure it is meeting our goals and identify areas for improvement. PCORI staff sought the PEAP PCA Workgroup's input on the questions PCORI seeks to answer about the merit review process and the ways we are answering them.

ATTENDEES

PEAP PCA Workgroup Members	PCORI Staff
• Marilyn Geller • Crispin Goytia-Vasquez • Brendaly Rodriguez • Beverly Rogers • Danny van Leeuwen • Neely Williams	• Robin Bloodworth • Laura Forsythe • Rachel Hemphill • Michelle Johnston-Fleece • Carolyn Mohan • Emily Russel • Cary Scheiderer • Lisa Stewart • Krista Woodward

DISCUSSION SUMMARY

Robin Bloodworth (Data Analyst, Evaluation and Analysis, PCORI) presented information about why and how PCORI evaluates our merit review process, shared findings from previous evaluations, and facilitated a discussion to inform PCORI's plans for future evaluations of the merit review process.

Below, we summarize themes from PEAP PCA Workgroup members' discussion and feedback:

PEAP PCA Workgroup feedback related to making PCORI merit review and funding more equitable:

- PCORI has a rigorous, well-run merit review process, but there are opportunities to improve it by focusing more on equity and inclusion of a more diverse range of reviewers, investigators, and organizations.
- PCORI's merit review process favors academic institutions and medical centers, as well as more experienced principal investigators. Scientific merit (criterion 3) is given more weight than other merit review criteria.
- Some research organizations are unwilling to support people without advanced degrees as a lead investigator or as part of a research team. As a funder, PCORI has an opportunity to expand the definitions of who can be an investigator or co-investigator so that other organizations will follow our lead.
- PCORI can achieve more equity and inclusion in our funded research when we shift to more community-based research efforts and embed researchers into the community, rather than embedding patients and stakeholders into the academic/medical research environment.
- We are in a new era in which different types of people review research proposals. How can we equip people with less scientific expertise or writing experience to participate as reviewers? Their input is still valuable.
 - One workgroup member suggested the possibility of capturing merit reviewer input in alternative formats that do not require writing, such as audio or video recordings.
- The role of PCORI's Methodology Committee is undervalued. It has a role in determining ways to do rigorous science that is also community-based and equitable.
- PCORI's merit review process is very rigorous. Rigor is important, but we must ensure we are not focusing on rigor so much that we exclude the types of research PCORI seeks to fund.

PEAP PCA Workgroup suggestions for evaluation questions about PCORI merit review:

- Have we asked ourselves whether our current evaluation plan addresses issues of equity and barriers for people to get involved as merit reviewers?

- Does PCORI's merit review process allow PCORI to fund what it seeks to fund (i.e., research that truly helps people)? Which steps of the merit review process are facilitating equity, and which are barriers to equity?