

NCI Translates - The NCI Translational Science Meeting

November 7-9, 2008

Grand Hyatt Hotel, Washington D.C.

Purpose and Goals of the NCI Translational Science Meeting

The overall goal of the NCI Translational Science Meeting (<http://ncitranslates.nci.nih.gov>) is to accelerate translational cancer research. This meeting will expand the range of collaborations and interactions between investigators supported across all NCI funding mechanisms. In addition, the NCI Translational Science Meeting is the first step towards implementing the Translational Research Working Group's (TRWG) recommended prioritization process. It will familiarize the translational cancer research community with the TRWG Pathways to Clinical Goals and, using the Pathways as a guide, generate "Translational Research Opportunities" that focus on a specific clinical goal and modality (a drug, device, biomarker, etc.) and describe a research plan to advance it to early phase clinical trials. The Translational Research Opportunities arising from this meeting will be used to assess the breadth and quality of potential translational research "concepts" and determine if an NCI-wide translational research prioritization process should be developed.

What is the TRWG prioritization process?

The TRWG was an NCI-sponsored working group charged with evaluating the status of the NCI's investment in translational research and envisioning its future in an inclusive, representative, and transparent manner. In 2007, the TRWG presented a 150 page report entitled "*Transforming Translation: Harnessing Discovery for Patient and Public Benefit*," to the National Cancer Advisory Board (www.cancer.gov/trwg), which accepted its 15 recommendations to accelerate translational cancer research.

Key among the TRWG recommendations is the establishment of a yearly process to identify a small number of projects that are "ripe" for translation and provide the financial resources and the project management required to expedite moving those projects to the point of early stage clinical trials. This process is encompassed in 3 separate TRWG initiatives: a prioritization process to identify and rank individual projects each year, the development of project management assistance, and a proposed new funding mechanism referred to as Special Translational Research Acceleration Projects (STRAPs). The envisioned prioritization process is designed to build upon the success of current NCI-funded translational research programs, not replace them. It is expected to catalyze the identification of expertise, capabilities and resources along a TRWG pathway so that existing, high priority projects can attain critical maturational milestones and accelerate progress towards more advanced clinical testing. The NCI Translational Science Meeting will enable participants from the broad translational research community to participate in a pilot project that represents the first efforts to implement this prioritization process.

What are the TRWG Pathways to Clinical Goals?

The 6 TRWG Developmental Pathways to Clinical Goals are process diagrams that resemble engineering flow charts and outline the steps required to advance a basic science discovery to early phase clinical trials ([Clinical Cancer Research 14: 566-5714, 2008](#)). Two of the TRWG Pathways focus on the development of assessment tools (Biospecimen-based and Imaging-based Assessment Modalities) and 4 focus on the development of interventions for cancer treatment or prevention (Agents, Immune Response Modifiers, Interventive Devices, and Lifestyle Alterations). Each pathway has 5 domains: credentialing of the discovery, creation of the

modality, supporting tools, preclinical development, and early stage clinical trials, as illustrated in the Generic Pathway diagram. The TRWG Pathways provide a framework for identifying the requisite expertise, resources, and capabilities to move credentialed basic science or population science discoveries forward to the point where definitive late-stage clinical trials might be warranted.

What happens at the NCI Translational Science Meeting?

At this meeting, translational accomplishments of each invitee will be shared in poster sessions dedicated to 1 of the 6 TRWG Pathways. Each poster discussion session will begin with a poster viewing, followed by co-chair presentations of how this research might be linked using the TRWG pathway as a guide. These co-chair examples will be presented as a “Translational Research Opportunity.”

A Translational Research

Opportunity focuses on a specific clinical goal, identifies a modality (a drug, device, biomarker, etc.) that can be tested in people, and identifies the population/cancer type in which it is to be tested. A Translational Research Opportunity template will be used to provide precise information on research groups with projects or capabilities that are relevant to each of the domains within the TRWG pathway. Participants will be charged with developing Translational Research Opportunities that complete a TRWG pathway by coordinating necessary projects/capabilities across research groups. The NCI Translational Science Meeting is designed to pilot the process of completing Translational Research Opportunity templates by the translational research community, which is envisioned to eventually occur through a web-based system.

The **NCI Translational Science Meeting** is an opportunity to enhance collaborative efforts across NCI-supported mechanisms and represents the first step in a process designed to ensure that the most promising concepts enter the TRWG developmental pathways and advance to the clinic as rapidly, efficiently, and effectively as possible. The Translational Research Opportunities arising from this meeting will inform the NCI leadership on the breadth and quality of translational research and form the basis of decisions related to the implementation of the TRWG’s proposed prioritization process. The ultimate goal is to realize the TRWG’s vision of transforming translation and harnessing discovery for patient and public benefit.

