Background

The US Army Medical Research and Materiel Command (USAMRMC) is a major subordinate Command of the United States Army Medical Command. The USAMRMC directs the management of a number of medical research, development, and acquisition programs, and began managing the Prostate Cancer Research Program (PCRP) in fiscal year 1997 (FY97). Since then, the PCRP has received a total of $970 million in congressional appropriations to promote innovative research focused on conquering prostate cancer. The primary objective of the PCRP is to fund innovative, high-risk/high-impact research aimed at the prevention, detection, diagnosis, and/or treatment of human prostate cancer. The program supports both individual investigators and multidisciplinary team science. Award mechanisms encompass basic, translational, and clinical research, and include emphasis on prostate cancer health disparities research.

The PCRP recognizes that African American men are at higher risk for being diagnosed with prostate cancer and, once diagnosed, are twice as likely to die from the disease as Caucasian men. The cause of the increased prostate cancer morbidity and mortality in African Americans is poorly understood; some studies have pointed to genetic factors, while others have implicated socioeconomic status as a cause of health disparity. Therefore, a major goal of the PCRP is to fund research on disproportionately affected populations to identify underlying factors that contribute to the disparity and to find ways to alleviate this burden.

By understanding the needs of the prostate cancer research community, the PCRP will be best prepared to continue to develop new program priorities and create new funding opportunities to support research on prostate cancer health disparities and find the solutions that are needed to improve diagnosis, treatment, and prevention of prostate cancer, and improve patient quality of life. Therefore, the PCRP is requesting input from the scientific community in an effort to identify opportunities to enhance support for health disparity research. This request for information (RFI) focuses on opportunities toward general support for health disparity research, resource development, infrastructure, and leveraging PCRP resources.

This RFI invites input from all Department of Defense (DOD) PCRP applicants and awardees, as well as the general prostate cancer research community. Institutions with enhanced access to disproportionately affected populations and/or with active health disparity research programs are highly encouraged to respond.

Information provided in response to this RFI will be used by the PCRP for internal planning purposes only. Therefore, this RFI does not represent a solicitation for proposals or any obligation on the part of the CDMRP or the DOD. Furthermore, the PCRP will neither use the information submitted to this RFI as a basis for which to make awards nor pay for information submitted.
How to Respond

Please limit your responses to 5 pages and label them PCRP FY09 RFI-001. Please provide responses in an electronic format and submit them via email to carolyn.best2@amedd.army.mil. A confirmation email will be sent in reply to each RFI response that is received. Responses will be accepted until 5:00 p.m. Eastern time, August 31, 2009.

Requested Information

1. Provide the name of the institution with which you are affiliated.

________________________________________________________________________

Check any of the following designations that best describe your institution:

____ Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU)
____ Hispanic Serving Institutions (HSI)
____ Tribal Colleges and Universities (TCU)
____ Non-Minority Institution
____ Other

2. Specify your highest degree: ____ M.D. ____ Ph.D. ____ D.Ph./D.Sc. ____ Other

3. Identify your level of experience as a prostate cancer investigator.

____ Senior Postdoctoral Scientist (minimum 3 years postdoctoral research)
____ Transitioning Investigator (within 3 years of first faculty appointment)
____ Early Career Investigator (within 6 years of first independent faculty appointment)
____ Established Investigator – Untenured (more than 6 years of independent research)
____ Established Investigator – Tenured

4. Does the research in your laboratory involve the study of prostate cancer health disparities?

____ Yes ____ No

(If yes, please identify the proportion of your work focused on health disparity: ____%)

5. Estimate the number of investigators at your institution that have 4 or more years of health disparity research experience?

____ < 5
____ 5 – 10
____ > 10

6. Do you think there is an unmet need in support of prostate cancer health disparity research?

____ Yes ____ No ____ Undecided

7. Indicate whether you have ever applied for any of the following PCRP award mechanisms. Check all that apply.

____ Health Disparity Research Award
____ Health Disparity Training Award
____ HBCU Collaborative Partnership Award
____ Collaborative Undergraduate HBCU Student Summer Training Program Award
8. If you have applied for one of the PCRP awards listed in question 7, please indicate whether or not your application was recommended for funding, and if not recommended for funding, whether you would apply again if the award mechanism was offered.

*Please circle the appropriate response.*

- My application was/was not recommended for funding.
- I do/do not plan to apply again.

9. If you have never applied for one of the PCRP awards listed in question 7, please provide the reason. Select all that apply, and rank them in decreasing order of importance, with 1 being the most important reason for not applying for PCRP awards:

- I was unaware of the funding opportunities.
- My research does not fit the award mechanisms.
- The application process is too difficult. Please specify which part(s) of the process:

  ______________________________________________________________________

- I do not have the appropriate collaborators.
- I do not have sufficient institutional resources.
- I do not have connections or access to disproportionately affected populations.
- It is too difficult to obtain funding (i.e., too much competition).
- Other, please specify: ___________________________________________________

10. If you do not study prostate cancer health disparity, or study it with less than 50% effort, would you be likely to add or increase effort if there were more funding available for prostate cancer health disparity research?

- Yes    - No

11. Indicate the types of resources that would be most useful to you in carrying out research focused on prostate cancer health disparities. Check as many as needed and list others that may be missing.

- Infrastructure resources (equipment, computers, databases)
- Reagents (cell lines, tissue blocks, animal models, agents/drugs, etc.)
- Methodological support (statistical, computational, etc.)
- Increased institutional release time for research
- Increased institutional support (e.g., matching funds, personnel)
- Collaboration
- Access to patients
- Other, please specify: ___________________________________________________

12. If you had access to increased support for prostate cancer health disparity research, indicate the types of studies that you would conduct. Please check all that apply.

- Basic discoveries
- Translational studies
- Clinical studies or Clinical Trials
  - Behavioral
  - Prospective
  - Retrospective
  - Other
- Epidemiological
- Population genetics
- Other, please specify: ___________________________________________________
13. The PCRP uses various award mechanisms to support innovative, high-impact, hypothesis-driven studies. Indicate which types of funding approaches you think would be most effective to significantly enhance prostate cancer health disparity research. Prioritize the list, using “1” for the best approach.
   __ Training
   __ Individual Investigator
   __ Multidisciplinary Collaboration Required
   __ Consortium with multiple investigators and institutions
   __ Partnerships between HBCUs and institutions with established prostate cancer research programs
   __ Partnerships with affected populations via membership organizations (Examples: Urban League, National Medical Association, National Alliance for Hispanic Health, American Indian Health Care Association, National Rural Health Association, Patient Advocate Foundation National African American Outreach Program, Prostate Health Education Network [PHEN], The Prostate Net)
   __ Other, please specify: _________________________________________________________

14. Do you believe minority institutions/colleges such as HBCUs, HSIs, and TCUs are in an advantageous position to conduct health disparity research?  ____Yes  ____No  ____Undecided
   Please explain your answer on a separate page.

For questions 14-17, please provide your answers on a separate page.

15. Describe the type(s) of institutional support that you believe to be important to facilitate success of health disparity research.

16. Describe the capabilities of your institution, department, and/or laboratory that best enable the conduct of prostate cancer health disparity research.

17. Describe the capabilities of your institution, department, and/or laboratory that would enable your participation in multi-institutional collaborative research projects focused on prostate cancer health disparity.

18. Identify areas in prostate cancer research that you believe are neglected or currently under-investigated in health disparity. Indicate whether these areas are low priority, moderate priority, or high priority, and provide reasons for your ranking.

For questions related to this RFI, please contact:

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