

# 2025 Current Fiscal Year Report: Joint Biomedical Laboratory Research and Development and Clinical Science Research and Development Services Scientific Merit Review Board

Report Run Date: 07/06/2025 08:40:56 AM

<b>1. Department or Agency</b>	<b>2. Fiscal Year</b>
Department of Veterans Affairs	2025
<b>3. Committee or Subcommittee</b>	<b>3b. GSA Committee No.</b>

Joint Biomedical Laboratory Research and Development and Clinical Science Research and Development Services Scientific Merit Review Board	2017
---	------

<b>4. Is this New During Fiscal Year?</b>	<b>5. Current Charter</b>	<b>6. Expected Renewal Date</b>	<b>7. Expected Term Date</b>
No	04/11/2024	04/11/2026	

<b>8a. Was Terminated During Fiscal Year?</b>	<b>8b. Specific Termination Authority</b>	<b>8c. Actual Term Date</b>
No		

<b>9. Agency Recommendation for Next Fiscal Year</b>	<b>10a. Legislation Req to Terminate?</b>	<b>10b. Legislation Pending?</b>
Continue	Not Applicable	Not Applicable

<b>11. Establishment Authority</b>	Agency Authority
<b>12. Specific Establishment Authority</b>	<b>13. Effective Date</b>
38 USC 7303	05/09/1995
	<b>14. Committee Type</b>
	Continuing
	<b>14c. Presidential?</b>
	No

**15. Description of Committee** Scientific Technical Program Advisory Board

**16a. Total Number of Reports** No Reports for this Fiscal Year

**17a. Open** 0 **17b. Closed** 0 **17c. Partially Closed** 1 **Other Activities** 0 **17d. Total** 1

## Meetings and Dates

Purpose	Start	End
<p>The Joint Biomedical Laboratory/Clinical Science Research and Development Services Scientific Merit Review Board supports the central VA mission in advancing Veterans' health in its review of Veteran-centric research applications. Supporting research helps to recruit and retain top clinician-scientists, as well as supports the VA Strategic Goals of improving customer service and implementing the mission action. Applications reviewed by the Board included research on suicide prevention, one of the Top 5 Priorities for the VA. Other high priority topics include traumatic brain injury, post-traumatic stress disorder, pain, and opioid abuse. The Board provided expert review of the scientific quality, budget, safety, and mission relevance of investigator-initiated research proposals submitted for VA Merit Review funding. The evaluations resulted in recommendations for approval or disapproval, levels and duration of funding, and a priority score reflecting the overall merit of the application. These recommendations were used by the Joint Biomedical Laboratory/Clinical Science Research and Development Services Scientific Merit Review Board to guide the limited research funds to the most promising VA-relevant projects that will impact the health and health care of Veterans.</p>	01/07/2025	01/07/2025

## Number of Committee Meetings Listed: 1

	Current FY	Next FY
<b>18a(1). Personnel Pmts to Non-Federal Members</b>	\$0.00	\$0.00
<b>18a(2). Personnel Pmts to Federal Members</b>	\$0.00	\$0.00
<b>18a(3). Personnel Pmts to Federal Staff</b>	\$0.00	\$0.00
<b>18a(4). Personnel Pmts to Non-Member Consultants</b>	\$0.00	\$0.00
<b>18b(1). Travel and Per Diem to Non-Federal Members</b>	\$0.00	\$0.00
<b>18b(2). Travel and Per Diem to Federal Members</b>	\$0.00	\$0.00

<b>18b(3). Travel and Per Diem to Federal Staff</b>	\$0.00	\$0.00
<b>18b(4). Travel and Per Diem to Non-member Consultants</b>	\$0.00	\$0.00
<b>18c. Administrative Costs (FRNs, contractor support, In-person/hybrid/virtual meetings)</b>	\$0.00	\$0.00
<b>18d. Other (all other funds not captured by any other cost category)</b>	\$0.00	\$0.00
<b>18e. Total Costs</b>	\$0.00	\$0.00
<b>19. Federal Staff Support Years (FTE)</b>	0.00	0.00

**20a. How does the Committee accomplish its purpose?**

The Joint Biomedical Laboratory/Clinical Science Research and Development Services Scientific Merit Review Board supports the central VA mission in advancing Veterans' health in its review of Veteran-centric research applications.

Supporting research helps to recruit and retain top clinician-scientists, as well as supports the VA Strategic Goals of improving customer service and implementing the mission action. Applications reviewed by the Board included research on suicide prevention, one of the Top 5 Priorities for the VA. Other high priority topics include traumatic brain injury, post-traumatic stress disorder, pain, and opioid abuse. The Board provided expert review of the scientific quality, budget, safety, and mission relevance of investigator-initiated research proposals submitted for VA Merit Review funding. The evaluations resulted in recommendations for approval or disapproval, levels and duration of funding, and a priority score reflecting the overall merit of the application.

These recommendations were used by the Joint

Biomedical Laboratory/Clinical Science Research and Development Services Scientific Merit Review Board to guide the limited research funds to the most promising VA-relevant projects that will impact the health and health care of Veterans. The Joint Biomedical Laboratory/Clinical Science Research and Development Services Scientific Merit Review Board supports the VA Strategic Goals by 1) scoring research projects based on their potential to improve Veteran health care and health, improving communication between researchers and clinicians; 2) advising what research proposals have the potential to improve treatments for diseases affecting Veterans; 3) providing a transparent and accountable mechanism for choosing the most impactful research projects for the well being of Veterans; and 4) evaluating the governance, systems, data and management of research project proposals.

**20b. How does the Committee balance its membership?**

The Board must have an appropriate balance of reviewers to evaluate the scientific, technical, and medical aspects of the proposals within the purview of the Board. Collectively, the members must reflect the broad-based scientific expertise required to competently review the research proposals received. Board members are selected based on their skills sets, experiences, credentials and with regard to ensuring a diverse group of members.

**20c. How frequent and relevant are the Committee Meetings?**

The scientific review function of the Board is performed by 32 standing review panels, which usually meet twice a year--spring and fall--in order to evaluate the scientific merit of research

proposals each year. For the current year, there were 59 review panel meetings. In order to assure timely evaluations of research proposals, semi-annual meetings of the review panels are essential.

**20d. Why can't the advice or information this committee provides be obtained elsewhere?**

The Board is composed of both VA and non-VA scientists, who are nationally and internationally recognized as experts in their respective fields. Local staff does not have the required expertise, and there is no other acceptable way to accomplish the scientific review of Merit Review proposals. The outstanding credentials of the review panels lend credibility to award decisions.

**20e. Why is it necessary to close and/or partially closed committee meetings?**

The closed portion of the meetings is devoted to the evaluation of research proposals from investigators whose ideas and credentials are discussed freely. These discussions must remain confidential to protect the privacy of the individual investigators and their research ideas.

**21. Remarks**

The Joint Biomedical Laboratory/Clinical Science Research and Development Services Scientific Merit Review Board reviewed 943 proposals in FY 2024 in review panel virtual subcommittee meetings during the November-December 2023 and May-June 2024 time frames. Virtual meetings of the parent committee were held on January 30 and July 9. The Joint Biomedical Laboratory/Clinical Science Research and Development Services Scientific Merit Review Board is structured to have scientific discipline-specific subcommittees and a parent

Joint Biomedical Laboratory/Clinical Science Research and Development Services Scientific Merit Review Board. The subcommittees report recommendations and activities twice a year to the parent committee. The Joint Biomedical Laboratory/Clinical Science Research and Development Services Scientific Merit Review Board reports reflect both parent and subcommittee membership.

## Designated Federal Officer

Michael R. Burgio Designated Federal Officer

Committee Members	Start	End	Occupation	Member Designation
Bickford, Paula	10/02/2024	06/30/2026	Senior Research Career Scientist, James A. Haley VAMC	Regular Government Employee (RGE) Member
Cai, Dongming	05/21/2024	06/30/2028	Physician, Minneapolis VA Medical Center	Regular Government Employee (RGE) Member
DeBeer, Bryann	03/16/2022	06/30/2026	Clinical Research Psychologist, Rocky Mountain Regional VA medical Center	Regular Government Employee (RGE) Member
Haroutunian, Vahram	03/01/2023	06/30/2026	James J. Peters VA Medical Center	Regular Government Employee (RGE) Member
Kimbrel, Nathan	10/01/2022	06/30/2025	VA Mid-Atlantic Mental Illness Research Center	Regular Government Employee (RGE) Member
Kuhn, Cynthia	10/02/2024	06/30/2027	Professor, Duke University	Special Government Employee (SGE) Member
Migrino, Raymond	10/01/2022	06/30/2026	Phoenix VA Healthcare System	Regular Government Employee (RGE) Member

Nagy, Laura	05/21/2024	06/30/2027	Professor, Lerner Research Institute	Special Government Employee (SGE) Member
Shukla, Ashutosh	05/21/2024	06/30/2027	Staff Physician, North Florida/South Georgia VA Healthcare System	Regular Government Employee (RGE) Member
Simon, George	05/21/2024	06/30/2027	Executive Medical Director and Department Chair. H. Lee Moffitt Cancer Center & Research Institute	Special Government Employee (SGE) Member
Stapleton, Jack	05/21/2024	06/30/2028	Staff Physician, Iowa City VA Medical Center	Regular Government Employee (RGE) Member
Travers, Jeffrey	05/21/2024	06/30/2028	Staff Physician, Dayton VA Medical Center	Regular Government Employee (RGE) Member
Troen, Bruce	10/28/2021	06/30/2025	Physician/Investigator, Western New York Healthcare System	Regular Government Employee (RGE) Member
Westlund High, Karin	03/16/2022	06/30/2026	Research Physiologist, New Mexico VA Healthcare System	Regular Government Employee (RGE) Member
Westrick, Randal	10/01/2022	06/30/2026	Oakland University	Special Government Employee (SGE) Member
Williamson, Peter	10/01/2022	06/30/2026	National Institutes of Health	Regular Government Employee (RGE) Member
Wysoczynski, Marcin [CARA (cardiovascular)]	09/01/2023	06/30/2026	Associate Professor, University of Louisville	Special Government Employee (SGE) Member
Singh, Manpreet [ENDA (endocrinology)]	09/01/2023	06/30/2025	Associate Professor, Stanford University School of Medicine	Special Government Employee (SGE) Member

Titchenell, Paul [ENDA (endocrinology)]	09/01/2023	06/30/2025	Associate Professor, University of Pennsylvania	Special Government Employee (SGE) Member
Xu, Pingan [ENDA (endocrinology)]	09/01/2023	06/30/2025	Assistant Professor, University of Illinois at Chicago	Special Government Employee (SGE) Member
Yun, Li [ENDA (endocrinology)]	09/01/2023	06/30/2025	Professor, University of North Caroline	Special Government Employee (SGE) Member
Suva, Larry [ENDB (endocrinology)]	09/01/2023	06/30/2027	Professor and Head, Texas A&M University	Special Government Employee (SGE) Member
Tang, Simon [ENDB (endocrinology)]	09/01/2023	06/30/2027	Associate Professor, Washington University - St. Louis	Special Government Employee (SGE) Member
Deng, Ruitang [GAST (gastroenterology)]	09/01/2023	06/30/2025	Professor, University of Rhode Island	Special Government Employee (SGE) Member
Keshavarzian, Ali [GAST (gastroenterology)]	09/01/2023	06/30/2026	Director, Rush University Medical Center	Special Government Employee (SGE) Member
Schnabl, Bernd [GAST (gastroenterology)]	10/02/2022	06/30/2025	Palo Alto VA Healthcare System	Regular Government Employee (RGE) Member
Verne, George [GAST (gastroenterology)]	10/01/2022	06/30/2025	Memphis VA Medical Center	Regular Government Employee (RGE) Member
Britton, Peter [MHBC (mental health behavioral sciences)]	03/31/2023	06/30/2027	Canandaigua VA Medical Center	Regular Government Employee (RGE) Member
Cheong, Jeewon [MHBC (mental health behavioral sciences)]	03/31/2023	06/30/2026	University of Florida	Special Government Employee (SGE) Member



Steinhauer, Stuart [MHBC (mental health behavioral sciences)]	03/31/2023	06/30/2027	Pittsburgh VA Healthcare System	Regular Government Employee (RGE) Member
Herrera, Juan [NURC (neurobiology)]	09/01/2023	06/30/2027	Associate Professor, The University of Texas Medical School at Houston	Special Government Employee (SGE) Member
Gonzales, Mitzi [NURD (neurobiology)]	03/01/2024	06/30/2028	Associate Professor, Cedars-Sinai Medical Center	Special Government Employee (SGE) Member
Kayed, Rakez [NURD (neurobiology)]	10/01/2022	06/30/2026	University of Texas Medical Branch	Special Government Employee (SGE) Member
Milos, Ikonomic [NURD (neurobiology)]	09/01/2023	06/30/2027	Research Biologist, Pittsburgh VA Medical Center	Regular Government Employee (RGE) Member
Orr, Miranda [NURD (neurobiology)]	09/01/2023	06/30/2027	Research Health Scientist, Salisbury VA Medical Center	Regular Government Employee (RGE) Member
Pletnikov, Mikhail [NURD (neurobiology)]	10/01/2022	06/30/2026	University at Buffalo	Special Government Employee (SGE) Member
Robinson, Catrina [NURD (neurobiology)]	03/01/2024	06/30/2028	Research Health Scientist, Ralph H. Johnson VA Medical Center	Regular Government Employee (RGE) Member
Yan, Lirong [NURD (neurobiology)]	10/01/2022	06/30/2026	Northwestern University	Special Government Employee (SGE) Member
Strigo, Irina [NURP (neurobiology)]	03/01/2024	06/30/2027	Research Biologist, San Francisco VA Medical Center	Regular Government Employee (RGE) Member
Deppen, Stephen [ONCB (oncology)]	03/01/2024	06/30/2027	Associate Professor, Vanderbilt University Medical Center	Special Government Employee (SGE) Member

Bailey, Kristina [PULM (pulmonology)]	03/01/2024	06/30/2027	Staff Physician, VA Nebraska-Western Iowa Healthcare System	Regular Government Employee (RGE) Member
Beers, Michael [PULM (pulmonology)]	09/01/2023	06/30/2026	Attending Physician, Philadelphia VA Medical Center	Regular Government Employee (RGE) Member
Freeman Basmajian, Christine [PULM (pulmonology)]	03/01/2024	06/30/2027	Deputy Associate Chief of Staff, Ann Arbor VA Medical Center	Regular Government Employee (RGE) Member
Ashok, Tuteja [SPLD (special panel Gulf War illnesses)]	03/31/2023	06/30/2027	Salt Lake City VA Medical Center	Regular Government Employee (RGE) Member
Chatterjee, Saurabh [SPLD (special panel Gulf War illnesses)]	03/01/2023	06/30/2027	Long Beach VA Medical Center	Regular Government Employee (RGE) Member
Cowart, Lauren [SPLD (special panel Gulf War illnesses)]	03/01/2023	06/30/2027	Hunter Holmes McGuire VA Medical Center	Regular Government Employee (RGE) Member
Hauser, Elizabeth [SPLD (special panel Gulf War illnesses)]	03/01/2023	06/30/2026	Durham VA Medical Center	Regular Government Employee (RGE) Member
Richmond, Bradley [SPLD (special panel Gulf War illnesses)]	09/01/2023	06/30/2025	Attending Physician, Nashville VA Medical Center	Regular Government Employee (RGE) Member
Staud, Roland [SPLD (special panel Gulf War illnesses)]	03/31/2023	06/30/2027	University of Florida	Special Government Employee (SGE) Member
Majetschak, Matthias [SURG (surgery)]	09/01/2023	06/30/2027	Professor, University of South Florida	Special Government Employee (SGE) Member
Uygun, Mustafa [SURG (surgery)]	09/01/2023	06/30/2027	Associate Professor, Harvard Medical School	Special Government Employee (SGE) Member

**Number of Committee Members Listed: 51**

**Narrative Description**

The Joint Biomedical Laboratory/Clinical Science Research and Development Services Scientific Merit Review Board supports the central VA mission in advancing Veterans' health in its review of Veteran-centric research applications. Supporting research helps to recruit and retain top clinician-scientists, improving directly employee experience and access to care. The Board provided expert review of the scientific quality, budget, safety, and mission relevance of investigator-initiated research proposals submitted for VA Merit Review funding. The evaluations resulted in recommendations for approval or disapproval, levels and duration of funding, and a priority score reflecting the overall merit of the application. These recommendations were used by the Joint Biomedical Laboratory/Clinical Science Research and Development Services Scientific Merit Review Board to direct the limited research funds to the most promising VA-relevant projects.

**What are the most significant program outcomes associated with this committee?**

Checked if  
Applies

Improvements to health or safety	<input type="checkbox"/>
Trust in government	<input type="checkbox"/>
Major policy changes	<input type="checkbox"/>
Advance in scientific research	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Effective grant making	<input type="checkbox"/>
Improved service delivery	<input type="checkbox"/>
Increased customer satisfaction	<input type="checkbox"/>
Implementation of laws or regulatory requirements	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Outcome Comments**

NA

**What are the cost savings associated with this committee?**

Checked if Applies

None	<input type="checkbox"/>
Unable to Determine	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Under \$100,000	<input type="checkbox"/>
\$100,000 - \$500,000	<input type="checkbox"/>
\$500,001 - \$1,000,000	<input type="checkbox"/>
\$1,000,001 - \$5,000,000	<input type="checkbox"/>
\$5,000,001 - \$10,000,000	<input type="checkbox"/>
Over \$10,000,000	<input type="checkbox"/>
Cost Savings Other	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Cost Savings Comments**

NA

**What is the approximate Number of recommendations produced by this committee for the life of the committee?**

16,625

**Number of Recommendations Comments**

This is the total number of recommendations for FY 2003 through FY 2024.

**What is the approximate Percentage of these recommendations that have been or will be Fully implemented by the agency?**

80%

**% of Recommendations Fully Implemented Comments**

The Board recommended funding for more proposals than funds were available to support.

**What is the approximate Percentage of these recommendations that have been or will be Partially implemented by the agency?**

0%

**% of Recommendations Partially Implemented Comments**

NA

**Does the agency provide the committee with feedback regarding actions taken to implement recommendations or advice offered?**

Yes ☒ No ☐ Not Applicable ☐

### Agency Feedback Comments

Each review meeting is informed about the outcome of recommendations at the subsequent meeting. Information on agency feedback can be obtained by contacting Michael Burgio at 202-603-4667 or at Michael.Burgio@va.gov.

### What other actions has the agency taken as a result of the committee's advice or recommendation?

Checked if Applies

Reorganized Priorities	<input type="checkbox"/>
Reallocated resources	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Issued new regulation	<input type="checkbox"/>
Proposed legislation	<input type="checkbox"/>
Approved grants or other payments	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other	<input type="checkbox"/>

### Action Comments

No other actions

### Is the Committee engaged in the review of applications for grants?

No

### Grant Review Comments

The research proposals reviewed by the Board are internal to VA and are not considered grants to outside entities.

### How is access provided to the information for the Committee's documentation?

Checked if Applies

Contact DFO	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Online Agency Web Site	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Online Committee Web Site	<input type="checkbox"/>
Online GSA FACA Web Site	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Publications	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other	<input type="checkbox"/>

### Access Comments

N/A