

TOBACCO SETTLEMENT AGREEMENT FUND OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE

Minutes of the 8th Meeting of the 2020 Interim

December 15, 2020

Call to Order and Roll Call

The 8th meeting of the Tobacco Settlement Agreement Fund Oversight Committee was held on Tuesday, December 15, 2020, at 10:30 AM, in Room 149 of the Capitol Annex. Senator C.B. Embry Jr., Chair, called the meeting to order, and the secretary called the roll.

Present were:

Members: Senator C.B. Embry Jr., Co-Chair; Representative Myron Dossett, Co-Chair; Senators Paul Hornback, Dennis Parrett, Robin L. Webb, and Whitney Westerfield; Representatives Kim King, Phillip Pratt, Brandon Reed, Rachel Roberts, and Dean Schamore.

Guests: Dorsey Ridley, Executive Director, Governor's Office of Agricultural Policy (GOAP); Bill McCloskey, Deputy Executive Director, GOAP; Jason Chesney, M.D., Ph.D., Director, University of Louisville James Graham Brown Cancer Center (BCC); and B. Mark Evers, M.D., Director, University of Kentucky Markey Cancer Center (MCC).

LRC Staff: Nathan Smith, Kelly Ludwig, Stefan Kasacavage, and Rachel Hartley.

Governor's Office of Agricultural Policy Report

Dorsey Ridley stated GOAP has allocated \$1.5 million in tobacco settlement funds and has identified \$2 million in funding from the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act to assist the meat processing program.

Bill McCloskey described the Agricultural Development Board's projects for November under the program. Mr. McCloskey highlighted programs including the County Agricultural Investment Program (CAIP), Shared-Use Equipment Program, and Youth Agriculture Incentives Program.

The requested program amendments discussed included:

- Lyon County Conservation District requested an additional \$24,811 in Lyon County funds for CAIP. The board recommended approval, which would bring the program total to \$55,811.
- Garrard County Farm Bureau requested an additional \$40,000 in Garrard County funds for CAIP. The board recommended approval, which would bring the program total to \$255,000.
- Franklin County Cattlemen’s Association requested an additional \$54,000 in Franklin County funds for CAIP. The board recommended approval, which would bring the program total to \$185,184.

The projects discussed included:

- Hancock County Cattlemen’s Association was approved for \$5,000 in Hancock County funds for a Hancock County Youth Agriculture Production Cost-Share Program.
- Menifee County Board of Education was approved for \$10,000 in Menifee County funds to purchase a CNC digital plasma cutter system and to update existing agricultural mechanics equipment.
- Green River Beekeepers was approved for \$960 in Taylor County funds to purchase new honey extracting equipment.
- The Kentucky Department of Agriculture was approved for \$2,624,895 in state funds for calendar years 2021 and 2022 to fund the Kentucky Proud program.
- Campbellsville Independent Schools Board of Education was approved for \$15,000 in Taylor County funds for a high school greenhouse.
- The Pennyriple Resource Conservation and Development Area was approved for \$2,500 in Christian County funds to help fund a community garden.
- The Kentucky Beef Network was approved for \$1,445,400 in state funds for calendar years 2021 and 2022 to continue to provide programs that enhance net farm income for cattle producers.
- The Kentucky Dairy Development Council was approved for \$1,594,123 in state funds for calendar years 2021 and 2022 to continue its mission of educating, representing, and promoting Kentucky’s dairy producers and the dairy industry.
- Hometown Butcher, located in Adair County, was approved for \$250,000 in state funds as a forgivable loan to expand its processing facility and to purchase additional processing equipment.
- Trackside Butcher Shoppe, located in Henry County, was approved for \$250,000 in state funds as a forgivable loan to expand its processing facility to include a second meat processing room with the necessary processing and packaging equipment.

University of Louisville James Graham Brown Cancer Center

Jason Chesney, M.D., Ph.D., stated Kentucky is ground zero for cancer in the United States with 10,000 deaths expected in 2020. The vast majority of Covid-19 deaths are individuals over the age of 70, while the vast majority of cancer deaths are individuals under the age of 70.

The national cancer death rate dropped by 25 percent in the past 20 years. Kentucky's rate is 180 deaths per 100,000 and the national rate is 150 deaths per 100,000. The reduction in the death rate is due to clinical trials of innovative immunotherapies, development of novel drugs that target cancer mutations, aggressive cancer screening programs coupled with discovery of blood-based approaches to detect cancer, and outreach and education.

In 2020, the Center for Cancer Immunology and Immunotherapy received an \$11.5 million federal grant over 5 years. The goal is to understand the interplay between cancer and the immune system in order to develop innovative treatment strategies.

The BCC is conducting Tumor Infiltrating Lymphocytes (TILs) trials of cancer-specific immune cells extracted and expanded from the patient's tumor. TILs will likely be approved by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) next year and the BCC will be one of only ten sites in the world to offer the therapy.

The BCC has built the first Good Manufacturing Practices clean room in the central part of the United States designed to create novel Chimeric Antigen Receptor (CAR) T cells against multiple types of cancer.

BCC researchers have discovered a novel class of RAS (renin-angiotensin-system) inhibitors that suppress tumor growth in mice. There are no FDA approved drugs for cancer that target RAS. Clinical trials to develop the RAS inhibitors are being developed.

The BCC has hired a dedicated cancer screening liaison to coordinate its screening services through the region. The expansion has increased the number of cancer screenings for Kentuckians.

The Krista Loyd Resource Center and new SOAR Wellness Program are providing services to patients seeking to reduce the risk of cancer. Funds were raised for a mobile cancer screening van to support cancer screening and education.

The Kentucky Cancer Program and Kentucky African Americans Against Cancer participated in a webinar relating to participation and access to clinical trials for African Americans.

University of Louisville cancer researchers are helping to fight Covid-19. A drug that was originally developed for cancer was discovered to suppress Covid-19 infections

and has been licensed for clinical development. An \$8.5 million grant received from the Department of Defense will assist in developing a nasal spray to prevent serious viral respiratory infections, and a researcher discovered a biomarker that predicts Covid-19 complications.

In response to Representative Roberts, Dr. Chesney stated most cancers are curable if a screening detects the cancer early.

University of Kentucky Markey Cancer Center

B. Mark Evers, M.D., stated the mission of Markey Cancer Center (MCC) is to reduce cancer mortality through cancer research, treatment, education, and community engagement with a particular focus on the underserved population of Appalachian Kentucky.

Kentucky ranks first in cancer mortality in the United States with a 23 percent higher death rate than the national average. Cancer patients from central and eastern Kentucky comprise 93 percent of the patients who receive care from MCC.

The reach of MCC extends throughout Kentucky. There are currently 20 MCC affiliate network sites and seven research network sites in Kentucky. The network infrastructure supports the efforts of community hospitals in providing high quality cancer care.

In April 2020, MCC began to utilize telehealth for follow-up visits due to the pandemic. MCC continues telehealth care with 200-300 patients per month.

MCC was awarded an initial designation by the National Cancer Institute (NCI) in 2013, and the designation was renewed in 2018. In 2022, MCC plans to apply for comprehensive status.

Due to the initial NCI designation, there has been an increase in cancer patient volume and funding. The total funding has increased from \$28.4 million in 2012 to \$52.2 million in 2020.

There are two recent projects that are focused on minorities in Kentucky. The Kentucky Community Cancer Awareness Research and Education Project is focused on lung cancer disparities among racial and ethnic minorities, and the Diabetes Prevention Program to promote weight loss and lifestyle changes.

The MCC investigators are developing a novel natural product repository of over 900 bacteria strains and over 450 pure products. The majority were collected in abandoned mining shafts in Kentucky. The investigators have identified and are testing new compounds for the treatment of cancer.

MCC investigators are working in collaboration with the University of Kentucky College of Agriculture, Food, and Environment to grow sweet wormwood. The compound artesunate is being used in clinical trials as a treatment for cancer.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.