

ARCHIVE NEWS RELEASE

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New Board of Governors Announced for the Warren Grant Magnuson Clinical Center

Bethesda, Maryland — Health and Human Services Secretary Donna E. Shalala announced today that a national board of experts, assembled to oversee management of the hospital at the National Institutes of Health in Bethesda, Maryland, will meet at NIH for the first time on Monday, Oct. 21.

Secretary Shalala tapped physicians, scientists, and health-care managers from some of the nation's top hospitals and from across the NIH to serve on the newly appointed Board of Governors for the Warren Grant Magnuson Clinical Center.

John J. Finan, Jr., president and chief executive officer of the Franciscan Missionaries of Our Lady Health System in Baton Rouge, will chair the 17-member Board.

"The Clinical Center at NIH is the country's premier medical research facility," said Secretary Shalala. "The Board's experience and expertise will enhance the hospital's ability to support research that stands to enhance the lives and health of each American."

"The National Institutes of Health depends on the Clinical Center to provide an efficient, responsive environment for its conduct of clinical research," added Dr. Harold Varmus, NIH director. "Secretary Shalala has assembled an outstanding group of professionals to add to the hospital's ability to carry out that mission."

Changing how the 43-year-old, 350-bed NIH Clinical Center is governed topped the list of improvements for the hospital suggested by a team of reviewers appointed by Secretary Shalala in 1995.

She named Dr. Helen Smits, former deputy administrator of the Health Care Financing Administration, to chair the team that scrutinized how the Clinical Center carries out its business.

A major recommendation in the team's report, released in January, included a blueprint for the newly named Board of Governors to draw on the expertise of leaders from outside organizations and inside NIH.

"The Board's role is to bring added value to the great work already being done at NIH and at the Clinical Center," explained Finan, who was a member of that original evaluation team. "The Board members have a depth and breadth of experience that will strengthen the systems and processes of the hospital and, ultimately, the ability to support scientific research."

Developing a strategic plan for the CC, another major recommendation contained in the report, will top the Board's agenda at the first meeting.

A third major recommendation was for a new facility for the hospital and research laboratories. The centerpiece of NIH's 1997 budget is the \$90 million down payment on a Clinical Research Center (CRC), which according to the new budget law, will bear the name "Mark O. Hatfield Clinical Research Center," in honor of the retiring Republican Senator from Oregon who has chaired the Senate appropriations committee and has been a medical research supporter in the Senate since 1967.

CRC construction carries a \$310 million price tag, with funding phases spread over several years, and is slated to begin in this fiscal year. The current budget signed into law by President Clinton contains precise language allowing NIH to contract for the full scope of the new project even though future year appropriations will be needed to complete funding.

Named to the Board from outside the NIH are: Dr. J. Claude Bennett, president of the University of Alabama at Birmingham; William B. Kerr, chief executive officer of the Medical Center at the University of California-San Francisco; Dr. Stephen C. Schimpff, executive vice president of the University of Maryland Medical Center, Baltimore; Dr. Helen L. Smits, president and medical director of HealthRight, Inc., in Meriden, Conn.; and Ellen M. Zane, network president of Partners in HealthCare System, Inc., Boston.

Appointed to the Board from NIH are: Dr. Patricia A. Grady, director of the National Institute for Nursing Research; Dr. Jeffrey M. Hoeg, chief of the cell biology section of the Molecular Diseases Branch, National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute; Dr. Carl Kupfer, director of the National Eye Institute; Dr. Griffin P. Rodgers, chief of the molecular hematology section, Laboratory of Chemical Biology, and Dr. Allen M. Spiegel, scientific director, National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases; Dr. Susan Swedo, acting scientific director of the National Institute of Mental Health; and Dr. Robert Wittes, director of the National Cancer Institute's Division of Cancer Treatment, Diagnosis and Centers.

Four positions on the board remain to be filled.

"We are privileged to have such a distinguished group of advisors to help us chart the future course of change necessary for the Clinical Center to continue its tradition as a center of excellence in clinical research," said Dr. John I. Gallin, Clinical Center director, who will serve as an ex officio member of the board."