

## Minutes of the first Board Meeting:

### Minutes

#### Schizophrenia International Research Society (SIRS) Founding Board Teleconference Meeting

February 7, 2005 2:00 – 3:00 pm

Present: Bill Deakin, Lynn Delisi, Robert Freedman, Raquel Gur, Rene Kahn, John Kane, Shatij Kapur, John McGrath, Herb Meltzer, Robin Murray, Henry Nasrallah

Absent: Wolfgang Fleischhacker, Phillip Harvey, Eve Johnstone, Jeff Lieberman, Pat McGorry, Sui Tianmei, John Waddington, Dan Weinberger

1. The meeting began with Drs. Nasrallah and Delisi welcoming the SIRS Founding Board Members. They provided a historical background for the formation of the society dating back more than five years. They emphasized that they finally decided to form the Founding Board so that they will elect officers and adopt bylaws that guarantee a democratic governance structure as quickly as possible.
2. In order to develop the society, SIRS was incorporated in the State of Tennessee as a non-profit, tax-exempt professional society according to Federal guidelines. A bank account was opened for the Society, website begun and a logo designed. In addition to the 19-member Founding Board, an International Advisory Council of 30-40 members is being established and some members have already been invited and accepted the invitations to join it.
3. A call for charter membership has been disseminated electronically as well as via flyers in the recent issue of *Schizophrenia Research*, which will serve as the official journal of the society. The membership dues were kept very low (\$40 for members, \$20 for trainees) and include a full hard copy and on-line subscription to *Schizophrenia Research* (24 issues in 2005).
4. A draft of the bylaws, modeled after other international scientific societies, has been written in order to be able to incorporate and will be sent to the board members for their comments prior to a discussion and ratification at a future meeting. It was explained that it was necessary to begin with something, but that the society as it evolves can amend and even re-write the bylaws in the future.
5. An Executive Secretary (Oakley Ray, PhD) has been appointed for an initial contract of one year, which is renewable by the board.
6. The Mission Statement of the society has been drafted and distributed with the call for membership.

7. Board members raised the issue of the interface between the society and the two international meetings held on alternate years in the U.S. (ICOSR organized by Carol Tamminga and Charles Schulz) and Europe (Winter Workshop, organized by Steven Hirsch and Tim Crow). Drs. Delisi and Nasrallah informed the board that they are very eager to reach agreements with both meeting organizers to make them official meetings of the society. They provided details of how they arranged for a conference call with Drs. Tamminga and Schulz as well as Dr. Hirsch, in which they invited them to develop agreements that assumes their autonomy as meeting organizers but which would officially recognize both meetings as society events. Both organizers are supposed to respond in the near future. Dr Gur expressed her concern that young people be involved and that they are not confused by the appearance that those who run the meetings, journals and now the society are somehow split in how to proceed.
8. Drs. Freedman, Gur and Murray told the group that Dr. Tamminga has recently asked them to serve on an advisory committee for the ICOSR, chaired by Dr. Braff, which also includes Dr. Weinberger, another SIRS board member. All three agreed to help in bringing the Society and ICOSR together in order to unify the field and avoid unnecessary fragmentation. Drs. Nasrallah and Delisi expressed their strong support for these efforts.
9. The issue was raised about the publishing of ICOSR abstracts in *Schizophrenia Bulletin* this year instead of *Schizophrenia Research*. Drs. Delisi and Nasrallah informed the board members that *Schizophrenia Research* has published the abstracts of the ICOSR and the Winter Workshop for the past 18 years but this year, Drs. Tamminga and Schulz decided to go to the *Schizophrenia Bulletin* without offering *Schizophrenia Research* the opportunity to bid for the abstracts. They mentioned also that *Schizophrenia Research* offered Dr. Hirsch the ability to publish the winter workshop abstracts in February 2006 at a considerably lower price than what the ICOSR is paying to *Schizophrenia Bulletin* and that this has been accepted. Thus, the reason for this switch by ICOSR was unclear. However, Dr. DeLisi noted that Dr. Carpenter had mentioned to her that part of his contract for obtaining the editorship of *Schizophrenia Bulletin* from the NIMH was that he would be publishing the abstracts of the ICOSR and other related special issues. Drs. Nasrallah and Delisi also mentioned their flexibility on the issue of having more than one official society journal, such as the inclusion of *Schizophrenia Bulletin* as well as *Schizophrenia Research*, as they could serve different complementary purposes to the field, and that the Board and membership could eventually make this decision.

10. Drs. Delisi and Nasrallah emphasized the importance of transparency and democracy in the society, which should also apply to its annual meetings. For the past 20 years, the scientific programs of ICOSR and the Winter Workshops have been under the leadership of the above organizers and the finances kept private. A society, like the ACNP or Biological Psychiatry, determine the annual meetings

by their governance which includes a rotating program committee and elected leadership of a not-for-profit professional organization. They emphasized that SIRS will strive to maintain the highest standards for the science and for involvement of all facets of the field, particularly in allowing the opportunity for leadership roles for more junior investigators.

11. Board members who are serving as advisors to the ICOSR suggested that Drs. Delisi and Nasrallah should be included in Dr. Braff's ICOSR discussion about integrating the society, the journals and meetings for schizophrenia researchers. Dr. Freedman volunteered to propose this to Dr. Braff.
12. A discussion of the next board meeting followed. Several members said that they would not be able to attend if the meeting were to be held shortly before the ICOSR at a venue such as in Atlanta. Although meeting in Savannah at the time of the ICOSR appeared to be the most convenient venue and time, concern was raised for sensitivity toward an as of yet unresolved relationship with the ICOSR. Dr. Freedman suggested that Dr. Braff be invited to discuss the link with the ICOSR. Dr. Delisi added that Dr. Braff has been invited to join the society's International Advisory Council and has accepted and offered to serve as a liaison to other societies.
13. Drs. Delisi and Nasrallah informed the Board that they will send them several items over the next few days including the bylaws draft, several alternate dates to choose for the next meeting, and a nomination form for officers and 3 councilors. The seven officers will be elected by the membership at large and will then comprise the Executive Council at the Founding Board. All nominees for officers according to the current bylaws must be members of the Founding Board of Directors.
14. The meeting was adjourned at 3:00 pm after Drs. Nasrallah and Delisi thanked the board for their support, advice and honest feedback on how to assure the success of the society.

Respectfully submitted

Lynn Delisi, MD  
Henry Nasrallah, MD  
2/14/05