



**Commonwealth Health Research Board**  
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**From the Commonwealth Health Research Board**

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M.D., M.B.A.  
Roanoke, VA*

*Vice Chair*

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M.D.  
Richmond, VA*

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The Commonwealth Health Research Board [CHRB] today announced its new officers for 2019/2020. Cynda A. Johnson, M.D., M.B.A., has been reelected to the position of Chair and Robert W. Downs, Jr., M.D., has been elected to the position of Vice Chair.

Dr. Johnson received her undergraduate degree from Stanford University and her medical school degree from the UCLA School of Medicine. She completed her residency training in family medicine at the University of Kansas Medical Center and a teaching fellowship at the University of North Carolina. Dr. Johnson is currently retired with an appointment of Founding Dean Emerita at Virginia Tech Carilion School of Medicine - a joint venture of Carilion Clinic and Virginia Tech. VTC SOM was awarded full accreditation and graduated its charter class in May 2014. She is a past president of the American Board of Family Practice (now Family Medicine) and the American Board of Medical Specialties. Dr. Johnson was a busy clinician for 30 years focusing on maternal and child health including obstetrics and outpatient gynecology.

Dr. Johnson was initially appointed to the CHRB by the Joint Rules Committee to serve an unexpired term of five years ending March 31, 2016. Dr. Johnson was reappointed to the CHRB by the Joint Rules Committee for a term of five years ending March 31, 2021.

Dr. Downs received his undergraduate and medical school degrees from Duke University. He completed an internship and residency at Barnes Hospital in St. Louis, Missouri from 1974 to 1976 and then served as a Research Associate and Clinical Associate at the National Institute of Arthritis, Diabetes, Digestive and Kidney Diseases (NIADDK) from 1976 to 1983, when he joined the faculty of Virginia Commonwealth University School of Medicine. Dr. Downs is currently retired with an appointment as Professor Emeritus of the Internal Medicine/Endocrinology faculty at VCU School of Medicine and continues to serve as Deputy Editor for the Journal of Women's Health. Dr. Downs's career spanned over 40 years focusing on osteoporosis diagnosis, prevention, education, and treatment, including clinical trials of new drugs for the management of osteoporosis and prevention of fractures.

Dr. Downs was appointed to the CHRB by the Governor to serve a term of five years ending March 31, 2020.

The Board was established in 1997 by the Virginia General Assembly using funds provided from the conversion of Trigon from a mutual company to a stock company. The Board awards grants for traditional medical and biomedical research as well as research related to health services and the delivery of health care. Since its inception in 1999, the CHRB has funded **230** research grants totaling approximately **\$19.2** million. CHRB grant recipients have leveraged approximately **\$35** million in additional private and federal grant funds to further their research studies. Additionally, numerous publications in peer-reviewed scientific journals and periodicals as well as presentations of the data at regional and national scientific meetings have resulted from CHRB grant funded research projects.