



Commonwealth Health Research Board
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PRESS RELEASE Dated December 2020

From the Commonwealth Health Research Board

Chair

*Robert W. Downs, Jr.,
M.D.
Richmond, VA*

The Commonwealth Health Research Board (CHRB) announced its new officers for 2020/2021: Robert W. Downs, Jr., M.D., has been elected to the position of Chair and Eric J. Lowe, M.D., has been elected to the position of Vice Chair.

Vice Chair

*Eric J. Lowe, M.D.
Norfolk, VA*

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.

Members

*Thomas W. Eppes,
Jr., M.D.
Lynchburg*

Dr. Downs was appointed to the CHRB by the Governor to serve a term of five years ending March 31, 2020 and was reappointed to serve another five-year term ending March 31, 2025.

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

*Julia A. Spicer
Washington, D.C.*

Dr. Lowe received his undergraduate degree in biomedical engineering from Johns Hopkins University and received his medical school degree from Emory University School of Medicine. He also received a graduate degree in Epidemiology from the University of Tennessee. Dr. Lowe completed his residency in pediatrics at the University of Texas SW Medical Center followed by a fellowship at St. Jude Children's Research Hospital in Pediatric Hematology/Oncology. He is currently the Division Director of Pediatric Oncology with the Children's Hospital of The King's Daughters. Dr. Lowe is very interested in clinical research and serves as the CHKD's Principal Investigator for the Children's Oncology Group, responsible for CHKD's involvement in over 70 national/international clinical trials.

*Administrator
Anne C. Pace, M.P.A.*

Scientific Consultants

Raya Mandler, Ph.D.

*Merrill Mitler,
Ph.D.*

Arnold Revzin, Ph.D.

Dr. Lowe was appointed to the CHRB by the Governor to serve a term of five years ending March 31, 2023.

The Commonwealth Health Research Board (CHRB) was created by Virginia Code §32.1-162.23 to provide financial support, in the form of grants, donations, or other assistance, for research efforts that have the potential of maximizing human health benefits for the citizens of the Commonwealth. Research efforts eligible for support by the Board include traditional medical and biomedical research relating to the causes and cures of diseases as well as research related to health services and the delivery of health care. Since its inception in 1999, the CHRB has funded **246** research grants totaling approximately **\$20.7 million**.

The CHRB encourages collaborative research efforts among two or more institutions or organizations, gives priority to those research efforts where Board support can be leveraged to foster contributions from federal agencies or other entities, and supports both new research efforts and the expansion or continuation of existing research efforts. CHRB grant recipients - for grant awards life-to-date - have leveraged over **\$38.2 million** in additional private and federal grant funds to further their research studies.