SPOREs Forge Paths in Data Sharing

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Specialized Programs of Research Excellence, or SPOREs, are multi-investigator projects focused on a particular cancer organ site or on biologically or thematically related cancers. These grants have been pivotal in promoting collaborative and interdisciplinary translational cancer research, bringing together basic and clinical scientists to work together on projects that can be more rapidly translated to the clinical setting. SPORE grants are collaborative efforts of multiple investigators, so sharing data within a SPORE is crucial. Making the data even more broadly available to scientists outside of the collaboration greatly accelerates progress, and the SPORE program has been a leader in the scientific culture change toward broad data sharing.

Funding announcements for SPOREs include the statement "It is essential that robust mechanisms be in place for making shared resource data generated by the SPORE readily accessible to research and clinical investigators in the broader scientific community." Application scoring includes a data sharing component, reflecting one of the core aims of the programmatic home of SPORES, the Translational Research Program (TRP), "facilitating the cross-fertilization of ideas, leveraging resources, and ensuring access of resources to projects and investigators to bring discoveries from the laboratory to the clinic in the most efficient manner" (an overview of the TRP). The TRP website is an excellent resource for anyone who wants to learn more about the SPORE program. Recent key accomplishments in the many areas of cancer research supported by SPORE awards can be found in "SPORE Advances."

Through their leadership in data sharing efforts, SPORE investigators and program leaders are forging paths forward in meeting the goals of the NIH DMS policy, to maximize the appropriate sharing of scientific data generated from NIH-funded or conducted research. Indeed, SPORE grants have been the basis of many datasets in NIH repositories, and it is certain that the scientific community will continue to benefit from new shared SPORE data for years to come.