

## Speakers:

IACC Chair Thomas Insel ("Insel")

Lyn Redwood ("Redwood")

Story Landis ("Landis")

Insel:

Let me introduce another issue and I'm sensitive to Lyn's concern about reopening things we voted on. I think one thing that didn't get discussed when we voted on this is a problem that didn't occur to me until after the meeting, which is that this is perhaps the only issue that we dealt with that is now part of litigation that involves the department, and it's a HRSA issue and I'm concerned about the optics, so the optics of having HRSA vote on issues related to autism and vaccines when they have a large court case, the optics of having people who have, could be perceived to have, um, or to represent those with a financial investment in this issue. It takes it out of the realm of a scientific question, a research question, and it raises the possibility that some could see whatever comments we make as being biased by nonscientific issues, and I understand that's a risk in lots of things that we do, this one really feels, since this is a court case that is soon going to become public, and I think it's fairly close to a large omnibus effort, um, I think that this one really does represent some jeopardy for this process, for this committee, almost any way in which it comes out. If we say, yes we think it's important to look at this, and to provide additional information, it implies that we believe that there is a relationship between autism and vaccines, and it suggests, um, that, um, in some way this runs opposite to what HHS may define through the HRSA process. If we say we don't think that this needs to be pursued it opens us up to the possibility, at least the optics, that we were trying to keep HRSA from having to go down this road legally. But I don't know that there is anything else that we are dealing with that has quite that set of complications, and to not talk about that or to not have that as part of our deliberation when we make a decision which seems to be a purely research question, should we encourage research in this direction or not, I think is a little naive, I think there is something else here that will be part of the way that this strategic plan would be interpreted, particularly because it's advisory to the HHS Secretary.

Redwood:

I don't think considering litigation with regard to research is really appropriate. I think this is an area that's deserving of research efforts, and I don't think you would do the same if it were something with breast cancer and hormone replacement therapy, saying we're not going to investigate hormone replacement therapy because there's litigation? I just don't see that that ...this is a scientific question, this is not a liability question.

Landis:

But, I think Ed made the point that this, these did not come up through the scientific teams, was added by this committee, which further complicates...

Insel:

That does complicate it, and it, so it has the appearance as if this committee has chosen, in spite the fact that the scientists and through the workshops did not generate any initiatives in this area, and in fact as we say that the science, I think we say the bulk of the science does not support any connection, we as a committee are saying actually we think we need to demonstrate this connection, we need to really study this in a much greater point, and there's a \$10 million number down here for doing that, which means that we put it at a pretty high priority, and it may be that the committee really wants to send that message, I just want to make sure that before we put this thing to bed, all of you have taken a close look at that and you've considered what this means, because this is, this is a real expression of a position we're taking on an issue that is both scientific and legal.