

**Valley Fever Center for Excellence  
College of Medicine-Tucson  
University of Arizona**

**Rationale.** Valley fever (coccidioidomycosis) is an endemic fungal disease in parts of Arizona, California, other states, and other countries in the Western Hemisphere. One half to two-thirds of all U.S. infections occur in Arizona which annually impact over ten thousand Arizonans medically costing over seven hundred million dollars economically. Of all states, only Arizona has a land-grant university with two Colleges of Medicine, each in a major population center situated in intensely endemic regions for Valley fever, and a school of veterinary medicine, very relevant because dogs and other animals also suffer from coccidioidal infections. These factors combined provide a compelling rationale for the University of Arizona's College of Medicine-Tucson to provide both state-wide and national leadership in managing Valley fever.

**Objective.** The Valley Fever Center for Excellence (VFCE) provides an organizational structure to implement leadership against Valley fever.

- This Center can facilitate collaboration of faculty from across the campus who share in this common purpose and assist recruitment of new faculty who wish to participate.
- This Center can develop a statewide collaboration of the three state universities and other institutions that wish to participate in managing Valley fever.
- This Center can provide a point of contact for efforts nationally and internationally to manage Valley fever.

**Mission.** The VFCE exists as an organizational unit reflecting the commitment of the University of Arizona's College of Medicine-Tucson to address the public health and economic problem that Valley fever poses to Arizona residents, its visitors, its businesses and those in other endemic regions through i) education and better understanding about the disease and its origins, ii) development of precise and rapid diagnostics, iii) discovery and validation of therapeutics, and iv) promoting risk abatement through ecologic and vaccine strategies.

**Vision.** Through the activities of the VFCE, i) national practices for managing patients with Valley fever will become state of the art, ii) the immunogenetic, environmental, and microbiological factors that determine disease severity will be precisely understood, iii) curative and safe therapies will be widely

available for humans, canines, and other susceptible species, and iv) a vaccine to prevent Valley fever will be a reality.

### **Membership.**

The VFCE is an inclusive and collaborative group. To facilitate this, there are three membership categories:

- \* **Member.** University of Arizona employees or Banner Health professionals who are authorized to be a principal investigator on sponsored projects.
- \* **Affiliate member.** University of Arizona employees or Banner Health professionals not meeting Member criteria.
- \* **Student member.** Any individual currently enrolled in a degree-conferring training program at the University of Arizona.

### Expectations of membership.

- Willingness to communicate with other members about possible areas of collaboration.
- Provide annually a report of current Valley fever activities to be posted upon the VFCE website.
- Accept requests to provide occasional presentations at VFCE-hosted seminars and other programs.
- Cite the VFCE affiliation on all publications related to Valley fever.
- Absent any real or perceived conflict of interest.

### Benefits of membership.

- Potential access to VFCE member-shared equipment, space, and other resources.
- Potential access to mentoring and other information about Valley fever from other members of the VFCE.
- Grant administration by VFCE as appropriate.
- Recognition of membership and posting of Valley fever activities on the VFCE website.

### **Governance.**

#### VFCE Director.

- Appointment by the Dean, College of Medicine-Tucson.
- Annually report the status of the VFCE strategic plan to the Dean.
- Offer to meet annually with all Center members individually to discuss members' participation in the Center's activities.
- Convene an internal advisory board to review the VFCE strategic plan.

## Governing Committee.

- Committee of no more than five members in addition to the Director.
- Membership composed of active VFCE faculty members and the VFCE head administrator.
- Committee members will be selected for three-year terms.
- Meetings to be held at least two times per year.
  - Review current VFCE activities and projects
  - Review and advise the Director on the use of VFCE discretionary funds.
  - Review the progress of the VFCE strategic plan.
  - Identify gaps in the VFCE program.
  - Propose initiatives for faculty recruitment.

## Internal Advisory Board.

- This Board will be constituted periodically and composed of no more than five faculty members of the University of Arizona.
- Its purpose is to review the VFCE program with the VFCE Steering Committee and offer suggestions for areas of growth.

## External Advisory Board.

- This Board will be invited by the COMT Dean for a review of the VFCE past performance and strategic plan.
- Timing of the review and composition of the Board will be at the discretion of the COMT Dean.

## **Center activities.**

- Maintain a VFCE website.
- Organize and promote an Annual Valley Fever Awareness week.
- Organize and promote an Annual Farness Lecture.
- Develop and manage shared containment facilities and other core resources.
- Conduct a membership meeting annually.
- Organize and conduct a Valley Fever Seminar Series in conjunction with other university organizational units.
- Assist clinical departments and divisions in clinical training.

## **Space and facilities.**

- Administrative space as required, currently 275 square feet which includes four cubicle desks and four offices in the Medical Research Building.

## **Development and philanthropic activities.**

- Work with the University of Arizona Foundation officer assigned to the VFCE by the COMT Dean to develop philanthropic support.