



Dear Dr. Curtz,

The Society for Immunotherapy of Cancer (SITC) appreciates the opportunity to comment on the National Cancer Institute's (NCI) request for information (RFI NOT-CA-23-063): *Needs and Challenges in Obtaining and Testing Clinical-Grade RNA-based Cancer Vaccine Formulations to Support Translational and Clinical Research*.

SITC is the world's leading member-driven organization specifically dedicated to improving cancer patient outcomes by advancing the science, development and application of cancer immunology and immunotherapy. For decades, SITC members have been at the forefront of cancer immunotherapy research working to develop and advance novel therapeutics into the clinic for the treatment of various cancers, including modalities such as established immune checkpoint inhibitors and emerging cellular therapies.

The advancement of mRNA technology and its application during the COVID-19 pandemic has been a remarkable accomplishment of scientific research and application, and as mentioned within the RFI is built upon years of research using mRNA vaccines to elicit anti-tumor responses. SITC is supportive of further NCI involvement in this topic and have some thoughts regarding NCI's role in supporting this field moving forward.

SITC sees a significant role for NCI to contribute uniquely to future platforms and next generation vaccines including DNA, RNA, and other vectors, and would be very supportive of further NCI investment in these areas. However, SITC would like to hear more from NCI on the vision for exclusively supporting mRNA research for cancer in the context of this RFI, as opposed to an approach that supports new research in cancer vaccination including mRNA vaccines. As mentioned in the RFI, recent results have shown new promise in this field which is being heavily supported through industry funding. This industry supported research, which has been bolstered by both positive data and COVID-19 funding, is already in advanced stages, and SITC has concerns that NCI support for a specific platform may have a difficult time creating significant contributions including within the points listed in the RFI.

SITC would be honored to collaborate with the NCI on this effort and further discuss topics identified as priorities via the current RFI. SITC would also be happy to engage with NCI about any questions towards our past, current, and future programing.

We thank the NCI for providing an opportunity to provide comment on this important topic. Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at mdean@sitcancer.org.

Sincerely,

Mary Dean, JD, CAE
Executive Director
Society for Immunotherapy of Cancer