



February 25, 2016

Dear University President/Vice President in charge of CMB affairs,

I take great pleasure in announcing our sixth annual round of the CMB Open Competition (CMB-OC) research program in Health Policy and System Sciences (HPS).

As you may be aware of, the CMB-OC program has been a flagship program of the China Medical Board to strengthen the capacities in HPS research and education among Chinese young scholars. In the past five years, the program has awarded individual research grants to more than 50 junior faculty members from our partner institutes, with a total funding support of US\$6.5 million. In addition to providing research funding, the China Medical Board has fostered an active research community of both junior and senior scholars, which help the CMB-OC awardees to actively network with each other for mutual support, collaborative learning, training, mentorship and opportunities for overseas exchange.

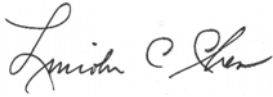
The nomination and selection of the CMB's Open Competition is highly selective and competitive, comparable to the most rigorous standards internationally. Abstracts of research projects are invited from CMB-affiliated universities in China, with each university able to select and forward their top 5 choices. The CMB grant awards may range US\$25,000-150,000 for up to three years. These abstracts are independently reviewed by research scientists outside of China based on soundness of the project design, understanding of the published literature, research methods proposed, fit between proposed work and time/budget requested, and the importance of the research for health advancement in China. In recent years, the reviewers have consisted of senior and junior faculty of Harvard Medical School and the Harvard School of Public Health. A short-list of abstracts, based on academic merit, are invited to submit full research projects, of which only the most meritorious are selected. In annual cycles, various academic themes may be emphasized, for example "health care quality with equity" is the priority theme in 2016. In 2015, 31 universities were invited to submit abstracts, 133 abstracts were received and reviewed by CMB evaluators, 29 abstracts were invited to submit full research project proposals, and finally 10 awards were made.

Despite its strong academic value, however, we have noticed that the CMB-OC award is not considered equally to the research grants of the National Natural Science Foundation.

This has in the past discouraged junior researchers from applying to CMB-OC program, as it does not count towards the evaluation of their academic performance. With the program's pursuit of academic excellence and its strict peer-review selection process, it is our sincere hope that the CMB-OC award could be counted towards individual researcher's academic performance and is considered equally to those of the National Natural Science Foundation or equivalent national/provincial/ministerial research grants.

May I also take this opportunity extend our CMB's warmest regards to you and your institute for a prosperous year of 2016!

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Lincoln C. Chen". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Lincoln" being the most prominent.

Lincoln C. Chen, MD
President