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Special Issue

Broder Resigns NCI To Take Job With Drug Company IVAX

NCI Director Samuel Broder announced Dec. 21 that he will resign to take the top scientific post at IVAX Corp. of Miami.

The announcement came six years to the day after Broder's appointment to the top post at NCI by President Ronald Reagan. Broder said he would leave the Institute in April.

"I'm leaving because I have at least one more career left in me," Broder, 49, said to **The Cancer Letter**. "I served for 22 years in the Public Health Service, and I've served for six years as the NCI director.

"I think that that's a lot of government service," he said.

Broder said IVAX made him "an exciting offer" within the past few weeks. "I'll be doing what I like to do: develop new drugs," Broder said.

Broder will serve as senior vice president, research and development, and chief scientific officer at IVAX.

The announcement came as a surprise to many industry observers, who pointed out that IVAX is not known for its basic research capability. The company, headed by former National Cancer Advisory Board member Phillip Frost, is best known for its generic drugs program and aggressive acquisition of drugs that are well into the development pipeline.

Goal: "Do The Right Thing"

At his swearing-in ceremony Jan. 10, 1989, Broder set the tone for his directorship by quoting Mark Twain:

"Always do the right thing. You will gratify some people and astonish the rest."

If the reaction to the news of his departure is an indication, Broder has done some of each. After hearing the news, some NCI

Rumors Preceded
Broder's Move

... Page 2

NCI "Leadership
Vacuum" Deepened?

... Page 3

"I'm Not Bummed Out
By This"--Broder

... Page 3

IVAX And Its Portfolio

... Page 4

Broder To Resign In April For Job At IVAX Corp.

(Continued from page 1)

officials expressed profound sadness while others did little to hide their joy. One source reported having observed two senior NCI officials trading high-fives, like basketball players.

"Without question, Sam Broder has served as NCI director at the single most difficult time in the history of the National Cancer Program," Terry Lierman, executive director of the National Coalition for Cancer Research, said to **The Cancer Letter**. "It's been difficult on all fronts: from budgets to rules and regulations, the shifts of NIH directors, some of whom have not been sympathetic to the needs of NCI.

"There is one special thing about Sam Broder that I admire," Lierman said. "In the cancer community, like in any large community, people often forget what their mission—their crusade—is all about, and instead focus on petty issues or territory.

"While Sam at times could be short, you always knew that his heart and his agenda were in the right place," Lierman said.

Many observers said Broder's leadership was compromised following the crisis over the National Surgical Breast and Bowel Project. Critics said Broder overreacted. Supporters said he did the right thing. However, many insiders said that following that crisis, Broder was never able to delegate the handling of the remaining

issues in the controversy and move on to other problems.

"I saw a transition from an idealistic, capable, vibrant guy, to someone enmeshed in fighting and parrying all of these embroilments," a source outside the Institute said. "You see this all the time in university presidents, in department chairs."

Following Broder's appointment, some in the cancer research community feared that as a basic scientist, Broder would de-emphasize funding for clinical investigation.

Broder proved them wrong. He successfully resolved old, simmering conflicts over NCI-funded cancer centers, pressed both NCI and NIH for increased funding for investigator-initiated clinical research and created the Specialized Programs of Research Excellence.

In speeches and Congressional testimony, Broder inevitably returned to the same point: NCI is an organic whole. The Institute works best when its programs reflect a balance between basic, translational, and clinical research.

Rumors Were Circulating

Broder's announcement did not appear to surprise anyone. Widely circulating rumors of his imminent departure prepared cancer researchers for the announcement (**The Cancer Letter**, Dec. 16).

"There were office pools on when it would happen," said one cancer researcher. "The job is exhausting."

When the announcement came, it touched off speculation about the process of succession. The Clinton Administration has been criticized for dragging its feet on appointments. If no successor is selected by the time of Broder's departure, most likely a senior NCI official would be named acting director.

Prior to Broder's appointment, Alan Rabson, director of the Div. of Cancer Biology, Diagnosis & Centers, served as acting director following Vincent DeVita's retirement as NCI director.

"I am very sorry that Dr. Broder is leaving," Barbara Rimer, chairman of the National Cancer

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Advisory Board, said to **The Cancer Letter**. "Not only has he been an outstanding scientific leader, but he has been a courageous advocate for scientific truth and the National Cancer Program.

"Some very significant advances and innovations have occurred under Dr. Broder's leadership. These include Specialized Programs of Research Excellence, the development of translational science, advances in genetics, and large-scale prevention trials.

"The board will miss his vision, extraordinary intelligence and wit," Rimer said.

Paul Calabresi, NCAB chairman from 1991 to 1994, praised Broder for his commitment to a balanced approach to the cancer program.

"Dr. Broder didn't come in with a personal agenda or program he wanted to push," Calabresi said to **The Cancer Letter**.

"He gave equal attention to basic science, clinical investigation and translational research, as well as NCI's outreach to all Americans. His concern was truly motivated by what would improve the welfare of the cancer patient.

"I hope Dr. Broder's successor will have an equal interest in clinical investigation and translational research," Calabresi said.

NIH Director Harold Varmus said in a statement that he was sorry to see Broder go.

"During his years at NCI, Sam Broder has made important contributions to research and to the management of the Institute, sometimes under very difficult circumstances. In addition, he has been a very valuable source of advice to me during my first years as director of NIH," Varmus said in a statement Dec. 22.

"I am sorry that Dr. Broder will be leaving the National Institutes of Health, but wish him well in his new position in the private sector."

Deepens NCI's "Leadership Vacuum"

Broder's retirement deepens the problem that NIH Director Harold Varmus has described as a "leadership vacuum" at NCI (**The Cancer Letter**, Nov. 4):

—Div. of Cancer Etiology Director Richard

Adamson retired last summer.

—Div. of Cancer Treatment Director Bruce Chabner announced he will retire in May.

—Recruitment for the NCI deputy director, to replace Daniel Ihde, who retired last year, had been completed just prior to Broder's announcement, sources said.

In an interview with **The Cancer Letter** Broder said that his retirement would likely cause that position to remain vacant, thereby allowing his successor to select a deputy.

Varmus has said that NCI would not fill the division director jobs until a National Cancer Advisory Board committee completes its study of the structure and funding of the intramural research program (**The Cancer Letter**, Nov. 4).

The NCAB Ad Hoc Working Group on NCI Intramural Programs is scheduled to complete its study by May.

Several observers said that the Administration could choose to hold off appointing an NCI director until the study is complete, in case the committee makes recommendations for significant structural and funding changes. Alternatively, the "vacuum" could allow Varmus to move quickly and implement changes through an interim director.

Said one prominent researcher: "Being the NCI director is one of the most difficult jobs around, and one would have to be either part hero or part masochist to enter it at this time, especially before the outcome of the NCAB working group studying the structure of the intramural program."

"I'm Not Bummed Out By This"

"I felt that I should make my contribution to downsizing of government, by reducing myself from it," Broder said to **The Cancer Letter** hours after he made the announcement. "As you can see, I'm not bummed out by this."

When the offer from IVAX came a few weeks ago, Broder said, he did not have plans to leave the Institute. "The offer was tendered from them. I did not go seeking it."

Asked why he was open to the offer, Broder said, "Phil Frost is the smartest businessman that

I have ever seen.... It wasn't any old offer. It is a very good organization.

"Basically, I'm at a point in my life where I have to decide what is it that I want to do," Broder said. "It is one thing to take a job at 49 and to look for new opportunities. It's another thing to do it when you are 60."

Broder said he had enjoyed his six years as NCI director. "Being the NCI director is the best, most exciting job, that any science-oriented person can ever expect to achieve," he said. "It is a unique, exhilarating experience. But I think...there is a time when you can stay too long. And I didn't want to stay too long."

Advice: "Clinical Research"

Asked to list his greatest accomplishments as director, Broder rattled off:

"Clinical research. Clinical research. Clinical research. I really feel we were able to turn around a real logjam in allowing individuals to be able to successfully compete for [funding for] clinical research. Not just clinical trials. I can say very confidently that a large number of people who had good ideas and were unable to secure funding to implement clinical research were able to do so in the past few years.

Broder's advice to his successor?

"Clinical research. Clinical research. Clinical research."

Any regrets?

"I hope that my successor will have the opportunity to announce that he or she is going to leave the Cancer Institute because a cure for cancer has been found, and therefore the Institute's existence is no longer necessary," Broder said.

"That was my fantasy. It didn't happen."

IVAX Pharmaceuticals

Industry observers said IVAX was a surprising choice for Broder. "There is not much new technology at IVAX," said one industry source. "[Broder] seems overcredentialed for what they have."

Lawrence Watts, IVAX vice president, communications, acknowledged that basic science has not been an area of emphasis for the company.

"It's always been our plan to be both a developer and innovator in the generics area, as well as a developer and innovator in branded drugs and delivery technology," Watts said to **The Cancer Letter**.

The Taxol Project

The company's projects include the development of an equivalent of the drug Taxol, a venture undertaken in partnership with NaPro BioTherapeutics Inc., of Boulder, CO (**Cancer Economics**, June 1993).

The NaPro-IVAX drug is being developed not as a generic, but under a separate application with FDA, Watts said.

Bristol-Myers Squibb has the market exclusivity for the drug until Dec. 29, 1997.

IVAX also owns a 20 percent stake in NaPro.

Watts declined to comment on Broder's salary.

However, according to the company's 10K form for 1993, filed with the Securities & Exchange Commission, the five highest paid executives earned between \$225,000 and \$340,000 in salaries last year.

In addition, four of the principal employees were given stock options in 1993. For two of these employees, stock options could be worth between \$1.7 million and \$4 million by the year 2000.

The lowest stock options compensation could be worth between \$645,000 and \$1.5 million by the year 2000, the company reported.

In 1993, IVAX earned \$84.7 million on sales of \$645.3 million, the company said.

"The entire management and staff of IVAX are eagerly awaiting Dr. Broder's arrival and his leadership of what we expect to be an extremely productive program for developing major pharmaceutical products," Frost, chairman and CEO, said in a statement.