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MARYLAND STEM CELL RESEARCH COMMISSION RECEIVES RECORD NUMBER OF APPLICATIONS FOR FUNDING

*Commission receives 180 applications
and announces availability of annual report*

COLUMBIA, Md. (Jan. 17, 2011) – The Maryland Stem Cell Research Commission (Commission) has received 180 applications to the Maryland Stem Cell Research Fund (MSCRF) in response to its three 2011 Requests for Applications (RFAs). This is the highest number of applications received in the program’s five-year history, an increase of 28 percent over last year. Several of these applications are in response to a new pilot program, championed by Governor Martin O’Malley and announced by the Commission in November, that provides an opportunity for Maryland scientists to collaborate with stem cell researchers from the California Institute for Regenerative Medicine (CIRM). The Commission today also announces the publication of the FY2010 MSCRF Annual Report, which outlines the benefits of the program to the State of Maryland, and contains project abstracts from all researchers funded during the FY2010 funding cycle.

“Maryland’s stem cell research program continues to attract the best and brightest scientists in the field of biotechnology and regenerative medicine,” said Governor O’Malley. “Year after year, our program draws quality applicants, gains national recognition and makes significant contributions, not only to the scientific research, but also to the economic development of our State. For these reasons, it’s imperative that we remain committed to funding and supporting this innovative and potential lifesaving research in Maryland.”

“Record-breaking interest in the MSCRF is a testament to the ongoing commitment of our State leaders, and our ability to advance critical stem cell research in Maryland,” said Margaret Conn Himelfarb, MPH, chair of the Commission. “Since the program’s inception in 2006, State-funded researchers have made significant contributions to the global field of stem cell research. The Commission is pleased that the program has already created hundreds of high level jobs in Maryland and millions of dollars in revenue for the State and will continue to do so.”

Applications received by the Commission for FY2011 include:

- 42 Investigator-Initiated Research Grant proposals – These grants provide up to \$200,000 of direct costs per year, for up to three years, and are designed for investigators who have preliminary data to support their hypotheses.
- 97 Exploratory Research Grant proposals – These grants provide up to \$100,000 of direct costs per year, for up to two years, and are designed for new stem cell researchers (young investigators and scientists from other fields), for new approaches, mechanisms or models that may differ from current thinking in the field and for new hypotheses that do not have preliminary data.
- 41 Post-Doctoral Fellowship Grant proposals – These grants provide up to \$55,000 per year, for up to two years, including direct and indirect costs and fringe benefits, and are designed for post-doctoral fellows who wish to conduct human stem cell research in Maryland.

The FY2010 MSCRF Annual Report outlines the progress and achievements of the program, and contains abstracts from the 41 projects funded in FY2010. Highlights from the report include:

- The MSCRF is an important economic engine for the State. In just its first two years of funding, the Program created \$71.3 million in sales and more than 500 local jobs.
- During its first four years, the MSCRF has committed \$68.4 million to 181 research projects.
- The MSCRF is the third largest State-supported stem cell research program in the country, ranking only after California and New York.
- The MSCRF supports collaboration between for-profit companies and non-profit institutions and organizations in Maryland. Twelve projects funded during the FY2010 cycle feature such collaborations.

The full report can be accessed by visiting

http://www.mscref.org/media/client/pdf/2010_annual_report_1_3_11.pdf

All principal investigators funded under FY2011 RFAs will be required to present their interim and final research results at an annual in-State symposium and in annual reports to the Commission. New stem cell lines initially developed with MSCRF funding are required to be shared with other qualified researchers.

Applications will be evaluated by a scientific peer review committee and reviewed by the Commission. Following TEDCO Board approval, awards will be announced in May 2011.

About the Maryland Stem Cell Research Commission

The Maryland Stem Cell Research Fund (MSCRF) was established by the State of Maryland under the Maryland Stem Cell Research Act of 2006 to promote State-funded stem cell research and cures through grants and loans to public and private entities in the State. Administered by The Maryland Technology Development Corporation (TEDCO), the MSCRF is overseen by an independent Commission that sets

policy and develops criteria, standards and requirements for applications to the Fund. The current MSCRF budget for FY2011 is \$10.4 million. For more information about the Maryland Stem Cell Research Fund and a list of Commission members, please visit www.msrf.org.

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