



Media Contact:
Kathleen Shaffer
(410) 902-5053
kshaffer@mghus.com

Danielle Davis
(410) 581-5928
ddavis@mghus.com

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Maryland Stem Cell Research Commission Receives High Number of Applications for Funding Consideration

Commission receives 171 applications; 5 from Maryland biotechnology companies ready for pre-clinical trials

COLUMBIA, MD (Feb. 11, 2013) – The Maryland Stem Cell Research Commission (Commission) has received 171 applications in response to its four 2013 Requests for Applications (RFAs). Over its seven-year history, the Maryland Stem Cell Research Fund (MSCRF) has maintained a high level of interest from the scientific community, and this year's response is no exception.

Five applications are in response to a new RFA targeting Maryland-based biotechnology companies ready to conduct pre-clinical trials. Pre-clinical research topics include cell-based treatments for HIV/AIDS, spinal cord injuries and demyelinating diseases such as transverse myelitis.

In addition, four applicants seek support for collaborations with investigators at the California Institute of Regenerative Medicine (CIRM). Now in its third year, this innovative pilot program currently allows Maryland researchers to work with CIRM's Disease Team II awardees conducting clinical research in heart disease, muscular dystrophy, Alzheimer's disease, and retinitis pigmentosa as well as CIRM Basic Biology IV awardees working to further understand the fundamental characteristics of different kinds of stem cells. The three collaborative MSCRF grants awarded to Maryland scientists in 2011 and 2012 have leveraged State-supported stem cell research with \$9,066,237 from the state of California.

"Research and innovation are two of the keys to economic development, which is why we continue to invest in our State's stem cell program," said Dominick Murray, Acting Secretary of the Maryland Department of Business and Development (DBED). "The Maryland Stem Cell Research Fund retains and attracts innovators and talented researchers to our State, ensuring Maryland's position at the forefront of modern medical research."

"We are pleased with the continued high level of interest in our groundbreaking research program, particularly by the number of applications from biotech companies ready to launch in-State pre-clinical

trials," said Margaret Conn Himelfarb, MPH, chair of the Commission. "We are also delighted that several of our applicants are interested in collaborating with California researchers conducting clinical as well as basic research. Clinical trials are the gold standard, and this more advanced phase of investigation brings us a critical step further down the pipeline toward the patient."

Applications received by the Commission for FY2013 include:

- 5 Pre-Clinical Trial proposals – These grants provide up to \$500,000 of direct costs per year, for up to three years, and are designed for companies conducting pre-clinical research in Maryland that seek to advance medical therapies in the State. These proposals have as their goal the receipt of clearance from the FDA to initiate new clinical trials.
- 32 Investigator-Initiated Research Grant proposals – These grants provide up to \$600,000 of direct costs per year, for up to three years, and are designed for Maryland investigators who have preliminary data to support their hypotheses.
- 92 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 Maryland researchers who are new to the stem cell field (young investigators and scientists from other fields), or for exploratory projects that have little or no preliminary data.
- 42 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.

Applications will be evaluated by a scientific peer review committee and then reviewed by the Commission, which makes funding recommendations to the board of the Maryland Technology Development Corporation (TEDCO). Following final approval from the TEDCO board, awards will be announced in May 2013.

The 2012 MSCRF Annual Report will soon be available at www.mscref.org.

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 FY2013 is \$10.4 million. For more information about the Maryland Stem Cell Research Fund and a list of Commission members, please visit www.mscref.org.

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