

Shaun Adamec
Governor's Office
410-974-2316
sadamec@gov.state.md.us

Kathleen Shaffer
MD Stem Cell Research Fund
410-902-5053
kshaffer@mghus.com

Bernard Siegel
Genetics Policy Institute
305-801-4928
bernard@genpol.org

GOVERNOR O'MALLEY AND THE MARYLAND STEM CELL RESEARCH COMMISSION HOST FIRST MARYLAND STEM CELL RESEARCH SYMPOSIUM

Governor O'Malley announces Maryland will host the 2009 World Stem Cell Summit

COLUMBIA, MD. (December 3, 2008) – More than 250 individuals today attended the **First Maryland Stem Cell Research Symposium**, jointly hosted by Governor Martin O'Malley and the Maryland Stem Cell Research Commission (Commission). This event was the first of what will become an annual event. During the opening remarks, Governor O'Malley announced that Maryland has been selected to host the 2009 World Stem Cell Summit, which will come to Baltimore September 21 through 23. The World Stem Cell Summit brings together nearly 1,500 stem cell stakeholders from across the nation and the globe to discuss critical issues in stem cell research and discuss the future of regenerative medicine.

The symposium, held in the Kossiakoff Center at the Johns Hopkins Applied Physics Laboratory, featured presentations from Maryland Stem Cell Research Fund awardees and poster presentations from over 60 Maryland-supported stem cell scientists.

"The First Maryland Stem Cell Research Symposium and the announcement of Maryland as host of the 2009 World Stem Cell Summit mark two very important milestones in Maryland's emergence as a national leader in life sciences," said Governor O'Malley. "Today's events will allow Maryland to continue to lead in life saving technologies and in this growing industry. I commend the Commission and TEDCO for organizing this opportunity for Maryland's stem cell research program to shine and look forward to working with the sponsors of the 2009 World Stem Cell Summit."

"Today's First Maryland Stem Cell Research Symposium is a remarkable event for our state and our scientific community," said Karen Rothenberg, chair of the Maryland Stem Cell Research Commission. "The Commission is proud to present Maryland's stem cell research in a public forum and we are extremely pleased with the level of enthusiasm as demonstrated by these researchers. Knowing the great strides they have made over the course of only two years of funding, we look forward to continued advancements generated from our state's investment in the future."

"Maryland is the obvious choice for the 2009 Summit. Under Governor Martin O'Malley's visionary leadership, the State has appropriated \$56 million towards stem cell research projects and pledged ongoing support," said Bernard Siegel, executive director of the Genetics Policy Institute. "It is a nexus of top-ranked research institutions, biotechnology companies and venture capital. Johns Hopkins University and the University System of Maryland are major stem cell academic centers and we are honored to partner with them in this global event."

The symposium also featured remarks from Maryland House of Delegates Speaker Michael Busch and keynote addresses from Johns Hopkins University bioethics expert Jeremy Sugarman, M.D., and scientific speaker Rudolf Jaenisch, M.D. of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Dr. Sugarman's remarks focused on key



ethical challenges facing stem cell research such as the use of embryonic stem cells, the use of chimeras, and collaboration across state and international borders. He also provided analysis of the current professional guidelines that have been issued by the National Academies of Science as well as the International Society for Stem Cell Research. Dr. Jaenisch spoke about stem cells, pluripotency and nuclear reprogramming; the mechanism of resetting the epigenetic modifications that are characteristics of the adult donor nucleus to ones that are appropriate for an embryonic cell. The Commission ceremoniously recognized both Dr. Sugarman and Dr. Jaenisch for their major scientific contributions to stem cell research. Specifically, Dr. Sugarman was honored for his contributions to stem cell bioethics research, while Dr. Jaenisch was recognized for general advancements in stem cell research.

“Baltimore is honored to host this prestigious group of medical researchers and scientists for the 2009 World Stem Cell Summit,” says Tom Noonan, president and CEO of the Baltimore Area Convention and Visitors Association. “Having Hopkins and the University System of Maryland in our own backyard, Baltimore has built-in resources and a knowledge base that are attractive for medical meetings and that’s why more of these groups are coming here.”

Governor O’Malley has committed to at least \$200 million in stem cell research investments over a ten year period, and included stem cell research as a priority in the Bio2020 Initiative announced last summer. Maryland is home to one of the three largest stem cell funds in the entire United States, and unlike many others, the money goes directly to research labs, helping these institutions propel the potential for life saving solutions. FY09 funding for the Maryland Stem Cell Research Fund is \$18 million.

Specific presenters and topics discussed at the First Maryland Stem Cell Research Symposium can be found at <http://www.mscref.org/content/events/annual.cfm>.

NOTE FOR EDITORS:

- Photographs of the days events and VIP speakers can be obtained by contacting Kathleen Shaffer at (410) 902-5053 or kshaffer@mghus.com

About the Maryland Stem Cell Research Commission

Established as an independent unit within the Maryland Technology Development Corporation (TEDCO), the Maryland Stem Cell Research Commission has set up criteria, standards and requirements to administer the Maryland Stem Cell Research Fund in accordance with the Maryland Stem Cell Research Act of 2006. The Maryland Stem Cell Research Fund has been established to promote state-funded stem research. With a current budget of \$18 million for FY 2009, the Commission will support grants to public and private entities in the State. 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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