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Maryland Stem Cell Research Commission Funds 36 New Projects in FY 2011

Two projects feature collaborations with the California Institute of Regenerative Medicine (CIRM), leveraging Maryland's investment in regenerative medicine with more than \$7 million to accelerate the pace of research

COLUMBIA, Md. (May 25, 2011) – The Maryland Stem Cell Research Commission (Commission) has completed its review of the 180 applications received in response to its three FY 2011 Requests for Applications (RFAs). The board of directors of the Maryland Technology Development Corporation (TEDCO) approved the Commission's recommendation to fund 36 new projects with the Maryland Stem Cell Research Fund's (MSCRF) \$10.4 million FY 2011 budget.

As highlighted in its 2011 RFAs, the Commission gave preference to proposals that focus on advancing regenerative medicine, by selecting promising research that addresses osteoporosis, traumatic brain injuries, heart disease, cancer, diabetes, schizophrenia, ALS, autism, DNA damage, intestinal tissue generation, clinical drug screenings, and other debilitating and costly medical conditions. This funding cycle, the Commission also encouraged collaborations, resulting in 10 awardees (more than 25 percent) proposing to work with private biotech companies. In a groundbreaking new pilot program, two MSCRF-funded researchers will collaborate with scientists funded by the California Institute of Regenerative Medicine (CIRM). These two projects, studying red blood cell production and traumatic axonal injuries, will leverage Maryland's investment in stem cell research with more than \$7 million in CIRM funding.

"Each year, Maryland's stem cell research program is a national leader in research and innovation while creating jobs and stimulating our State economy," said Governor Martin O'Malley. "I'd like to congratulate this year's awardees, and we look forward to their contributions to the field."

This year's MSCRF awards include:

- 9 Investigator-Initiated Research Grants (RFA-MD-11-01) – providing up to \$200,000 of direct costs per year, for up to three years, to investigators with preliminary data to support their hypotheses;
- 13 Exploratory Research Grants (RFA-MD-11-02) – providing up to \$100,000 of direct costs per year, for up to two years, to 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/or new hypotheses that have little or no preliminary data; and
- 14 Post-Doctoral Fellowship Research Grants (RFA-MD-11-03) – providing up to \$55,000 per year, for up to two years, including direct and indirect costs and fringe benefits, to post-doctoral fellows.

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All MSCRF-funded research must be conducted in Maryland, and must involve human stem cells.

For a complete list of the names of the Principal Investigators (PIs), their project titles and institutions, please visit the [awardees section](http://www.msccrf.org/content/awardees/2008.cfm) of the website (<http://www.msccrf.org/content/awardees/2008.cfm>).

Each grant awarded by the Commission is contingent upon the PI obtaining all applicable ethical approvals to conduct the specified research, as well as a signed agreement with TEDCO that describes the scope of the project, requirements for sharing any cell line(s) developed with MSCRF funding and a commitment to publish results.

“We are pleased to announce the MSCRF grant awards for FY 2011,” said Margaret Conn Himelfarb, MPH, chair of the Commission. “These projects exemplify Maryland’s investment in world class, cutting edge research. We are delighted that our collaboration with the California Institute of Regenerative Medicine will significantly augment State funding, establish new teams of expert investigators and expedite advances in regenerative medicine. The Commission is grateful to Governor O’Malley and our legislators for their visionary leadership and ongoing support of stem cell research. This pioneering science will continue to return dividends to our State.”

The final amount of each award will be determined during the due diligence process and will be listed in the MSCRF annual report scheduled for release in December 2012. All currently funded MSCRF researchers are required to present their findings at the 4th Annual Maryland Stem Cell Research Symposium to be held on October 6, 2011 at Towson University.

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 FY2012 is \$12.4 million. For more information about the Maryland Stem Cell Research Fund and a list of Commission members, please visit www.msccrf.org.

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