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Maryland Stem Cell Research Commission Announces Funding Opportunities and Annual Symposium Keynote Speaker

Commission kicks-off FY2015 by releasing four Requests for Applications, announcing the keynote speaker for its annual symposium; a world-renown expert on stem cells and disease modeling from Sloan-Kettering Center, and announcing the expansion of its partnership with the California Institute for Regenerative Medicine

BALTIMORE (Sept. 17, 2014) – The Maryland Stem Cell Research Commission (Commission) issued its 2015 Request for Applications (RFAs) and is looking forward to continuing to fund cutting-edge research programs through the Maryland Stem Cell Research Fund (MSCRF). The Commission also announced it has expanded its collaboration with the California Institute for Regenerative Medicine (CIRM) and is pleased to announce that Dr. Lorenz Studer, founding director of the Memorial Sloan-Kettering Center for Stem Cell Biology, will serve as the keynote speaker at the 7th Annual Maryland Stem Cell Research Symposium in December.

“There is a critical need for stem cell research to address a diverse array of debilitating and costly diseases and conditions,” said Governor Martin O’Malley. “Maryland’s investment in cutting-edge research programs through the Maryland Stem Cell Research Fund will enhance our State’s innovation economy and our leadership in the life sciences field.”

Established under the Maryland Stem Cell Research Act of 2006, the MSCRF is currently budgeted to commit up to \$10.4 million, in aggregate, in FY2015 to fund grants under all of its RFAs. These RFAs include: Investigator-Initiated Research Grants, Exploratory Research Grants, Post-Doctoral Fellowships, and Pre-Clinical and Clinical Stem Cell Research Grants. Under this funding cycle, all research proposals must pertain to stem cell based therapy and regenerative medicine. Priority will be given to translational and collaborative projects.

“Our grant opportunities support Maryland researchers in developing stem cell therapy that can change the lives of those suffering from complex diseases,” said Rabbi Avram Reisner, Chair of the Commission. “We welcome biotechnology researchers and companies throughout the State to apply for our funding programs with an eye to advancement in modern medicine. We’re greatly looking forward to this funding cycle and exciting year of educational programming.”

RFA-MD-15-1 is soliciting applications for Investigator-Initiated Research Grants, which are designed for investigators with preliminary data supporting the grant application, who wish to conduct basic, translational and/or clinical research involving human stem cells. Investigator-Initiated Research Grants provide up to \$600,000 of direct costs to be budgeted over a period of up to three years.

RFA-MD-15-2 is soliciting applications for Exploratory Research Grants, which are designed to attract and support investigators new to the stem cell field (young investigators and investigators from other fields) and for new and/or innovative hypotheses, approaches, mechanisms or models that may differ from current thinking in the stem cell field and have little or no preliminary data supporting the application.

These Exploratory Research Grants may request up to \$200,000 of direct costs to be budgeted over a period of up to two years.

RFA-MD-15-3 is soliciting applications for post-doctoral fellows who wish to conduct basic, translational and/or clinical research involving human stem cells in the setting of a recognized lab. Fellowship awards provide \$110,000 of direct and indirect costs to be budgeted over a period of up to two years.

RFA-MD-15-4 is soliciting applications for Pre-Clinical and Clinical Stem Cell Research Grants from for-profit companies that wish to conduct research in Maryland using human stem cells to advance medical therapies. Pre-Clinical Grants may request up to \$500,000 of direct costs, to be budgeted over a period of up to three years. Applicants for Clinical Grants may request up to \$750,000 of direct costs, to be budgeted over a period of up to three years.

Key Dates:

- **Letter of Intent Submission Deadline:** November 13, 2014, by 5:00 p.m.
- **Application Submission Deadline:** January 15, 2015, by 5:00 p.m.
- **Peer Review Date(s):** March 2015
- **Commission Review Date:** May 2015
- **Earliest Anticipated Start Date:** June 2015

The Commission is also continuing and expanding its partnership with CIRM, which is now in its fifth year. Through this program, Maryland researchers have the opportunity for collaboration with all funded CIRM researchers with the goal of advancing critical human stem cell therapies by fostering meritorious interdisciplinary research across geographical boundaries. Details about this collaborative opportunity can be found at <http://www.msccrf.org/content/fundingopp/index.cfm>.

Additionally, the 7th Annual Stem Cell Research Symposium, hosted by the Commission, will take place on Tuesday, Dec. 2 at the Silver Spring Civic Center in Silver Spring, Md., and Dr. Lorenz Studer, founding director of the Memorial Sloan-Kettering Center for Stem Cell Biology, will deliver the keynote Kellermann Memorial Lecture, which honors late stem cell advocate and founding member of the Commission John L. Kellermann III. Dr. Studer's lab aims at exploiting recent advances in stem cell biology to develop radically new therapies for degenerative disease and cancer. To learn more about the Symposium please visit our website at <http://msccrf.org/content/events/annual.cfm>.

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 MSCRF budget for FY2015 is \$10.4 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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