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Interest in the Maryland Stem Cell Research Fund at an All-Time High as Commission Receives 240 Letters of Intent from Universities, Research Institutions, Hospitals and 16 Companies

Strength and promise of the program will be on full-display at the 7th Annual Maryland Stem Cell Research Symposium on Dec. 2 at the Silver Spring Civic Center

Columbia, Md. (Nov. 24, 2014) – The Maryland Stem Cell Research Commission (Commission) is pleased to announce that it received 240 Letters of Intent in response to four official Requests for Applications (RFAs) for the FY 2015 funding cycle. The high response features a record 16 companies applying for funding, seven Letters of Intent for direct clinical work and 144 Letters of Intent for translational work. The strength and promise of Maryland's program will be on full display at the 7th Annual Maryland Stem Cell Research Symposium being held Dec. 2 at the Silver Spring Civic Center in Silver Spring, Md.

"This is a very exciting time for the Commission and the Maryland Stem Cell Research Fund," said Rabbi Avram Reiser, Chair of the Commission. "The response to our Request for Applications is a testament to the success and reputation of our program and the growth of the stem cell research industry as a whole. Maryland universities, prestigious research institutions, hospitals and a record 16 private companies all want to get involved in developing cutting-edge stem cell research in our State. The energy of our program and our research milestones and progress will be front and center at our annual symposium and we welcome the public to join us."

The Letter of Intent is a required component for funding from the Maryland Stem Cell Research Fund (MSCRF), which has a \$10.4 million budget this funding cycle. Last year the Commission received 195 Letters of Intent and the year before it received 171. Applications for FY 2015 are due on January 15, 2015.

Of the Letters of Intent Received:

50 are for RFA-MD-15-1, soliciting applications for Investigator-Initiated Research Grants. These 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.

124 are for RFA-MD-15-2, soliciting applications for Exploratory Research Grants. These 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 may 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.

60 are for RFA-MD-15-3, 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.

6 are for RFA-MD-15-4, 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.

The 7th Annual Stem Cell Research Symposium, hosted by the Commission, will feature several talks from key figures in current stem cell science. A highlight of the event will be a lecture by Dr. Lorenz Studer, founding director of the Memorial Sloan-Kettering Center for Stem Cell Biology, who 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. The symposium is being sponsored by the Montgomery County Department of Economic Development, The Johns Hopkins School of Medicine, Lieber Institute for Brain Development, Thermo Fisher Scientific, and University of Maryland, Baltimore. To learn more about the Symposium please visit the MSCRF website at <http://mscrf.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.mscrf.org.

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