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Interstate Alliance on Stem Cell Research Holds Fall Meeting at the University of Maryland Biotechnology Institute

International organization meets to discuss advancements in stem cell research – Maryland Stem Cell Research Commission plays host

Baltimore, Md. (Sept. 9, 2008) – Today, The Maryland Stem Cell Research Commission (Commission) hosted the fall meeting of the Interstate Alliance on Stem Cell Research (IASCR) at the Columbus Center of the University of Maryland Biotechnology Institute (UMBI). The international organization dedicated to the advancement of stem cell research by fostering effective interstate collaboration by assisting states in developing research programs, met to discuss critical issues facing the future of stem cell research. Approximately 30 individuals from nine U.S. states, as well as the United Kingdom Canada, The National Academy of Science and the International Society for Stem Cell Research attended today's meeting, which runs through tomorrow afternoon.

"We are pleased that the Interstate Alliance on Stem Cell Research chose to hold this important and significant meeting in our state, as it comes on the heels of a \$1.1 billion life sciences initiative to enhance the biotech industry in Maryland," said Governor Martin O'Malley. "Maryland is already nicknamed the 'home of the genome' and we now must work to strengthen our position as a national and world leader in the research and development of personalized medicine, which holds within it the potential to reshape the landscape of 21st century medicine."

Highlights of the meeting included presentations by IASCR member states and partners. Each state provided an update on its stem cell research progress in regard to key developments and advancements. Presentations also focused on information relative to legal ramifications of stem cell research and new legislative and regulatory initiatives. Other items of discussion included stem cell banking, cell line provenance verification, the significance of chimeras in stem cell research and collaborating with the In Vitro Fertilization (IVF) community to enhance consent for research. In addition, the state of Ohio was introduced as a new participant in the IASCR. Current participating states include California, Illinois, Massachusetts, Maryland, New Jersey, New York, Rhode Island and Wisconsin.

"We thank the state of Maryland and the Maryland Stem Cell Research Commission for providing us with a venue for this significant meeting of the Interstate Alliance on Stem Cell Research," said Warren Wollschlager, co-chair of IASCR. "This meeting allowed for some the most influential players in stem cell exploration to collaborate and address critical issues facing the future of this life-saving research."

"The Maryland Stem Cell Research Commission understands and appreciates the importance of sharing our progress and proven experience within the international stem cell research community," said Karen Rothenberg, chair of the Maryland Stem Cell Research Commission. "While we are making great strides in the funding of stem cell research in Maryland, IASCR enables us to share best practices with other researchers and governing bodies. It is quite an exciting and important opportunity for us to learn from one another and to help move the future of biomedical research forward."

A detailed agenda and summary of the meeting is available on the IASCR website and can be viewed by going to www.iascr.org.

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 \$19 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.msccrf.org.

About the Interstate Alliance on Stem Cell Research

The Interstate Alliance on Stem Cell Research (IASCR) is a voluntary body whose mission is to advance stem cell research (human embryonic, adult, and other) by fostering effective interstate collaboration, by assisting states in developing research programs, and by promoting efficient and responsible use of public funds. The goals of the IASCR are to identify and increase opportunities for interstate collaboration, identify and decrease obstacles to collaborative research across state lines and assist states who wish to develop or improve upon public funding programs in stem cell research. IASCR will do so in consultation with private and public research program administrators, private and public researchers, ESCRO members, consumers and other interested parties. For more information about IASCR, please visit www.iascr.org.

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