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Maryland Stem Cell Research Commission Receives 147 Applications for Funding

Commission also announces availability of 2008 annual report

COLUMBIA, Md. (Jan. 16, 2009) – The Maryland Stem Cell Research Commission (Commission) has received 147 applications in response to its three official Requests for Applications (RFAs) for funding through the Maryland Stem Cell Research Fund (MSCRF) under the Maryland Stem Cell Research Act of 2006. The Commission and The Maryland Technology Development Corporation (TEDCO) also announced today the availability of its calendar year 2008 annual report of the Maryland Stem Cell Research Fund.

“The positive response to the Commission’s request for applications continues to solidify Maryland’s national leadership position in stem cell research,” said Governor Martin O’Malley. “Maryland has a first-rate stem cell research program and I look forward to our State’s continued commitment to progress and advancement through the Bio 2020 Initiative.”

“The Commission is very pleased with the number of applications received and we look forward to awarding grants to the most promising stem cell scientists and researchers,” said Karen Rothenberg, chair of the Commission.

RFAs issued by the Commission for FY 2009 include:

- 38 applications for RFA-MD-09-1 (Investigator-Initiated Research Grants) – These grants are designed for investigators with preliminary data supporting the grant application. These Investigator-Initiated Research Grants will be for up to \$300,000 of direct costs per year, for up to five years.
- 70 applications for RFA-MD-09-2 (Exploratory Research Grants) – These grants are designed for investigators who are new to the stem cell field (young investigators and investigators from other fields) and for new hypotheses, approaches, mechanisms or models that may differ from current thinking in the stem cell field, without any preliminary data supporting the application. These Exploratory Research Grants will be for up to \$100,000 of direct costs per year, for up to two years.
- 39 applications for RFA-MD-09-03 (Post-Doctoral Fellowship Grants) – These grants are designed for post-doctorial fellows who wish to conduct basic and/or transitional research on all types of human stem cells in Maryland. These Post-Doctoral Research Grants will

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be for up to \$55,000 of direct, indirect and fringe benefits costs per year, for up to two years.

The total request for all FY 2009 Maryland stem cell research applications was more than \$85 million. The Commission received 187 Letters of Intent from potential applicants in November 2008.

The annual MSCRF report identifies the 82 award grantees from the FY2007 and FY2008 funding cycles, provides abstracts (as written by the respective principal investigators) of the research being performed, and the amount of funding each grantee received. Select MSCRF awardees presented their findings thus far at the First Maryland Stem Cell Research Symposium which was held in early December 2008. The full report can be accessed at <http://www.mscref.org/media/client/pdf/2008annualreport.pdf>.

The Maryland Stem Cell Research Fund was established to promote state-funded stem cell research and has a FY 2009 budget of \$18 million. Consistent with NIH practices – as indicated in the Maryland Stem Cell Research Act of 2006 – the Commission considers grant applications confidential and does not release specific application data until awards are made. Applications will be evaluated by an independent peer review committee composed of scientifically recognized experts in the field of stem cell research that reside out of the State.

The grants to be awarded under these three RFAs will fund basic and translational research with human stem cells of all types, as defined in the Maryland Stem Cell Research Act of 2006. The goals of this program are to broaden and advance basic knowledge of human stem cell biology that will be relevant for eventual development of clinical applications, and to enable, support and accelerate such clinical applications for prevention, diagnosis and treatment of human diseases and conditions.

Maryland will also host the 2009 World Stem Cell Summit that will take place at the Baltimore Convention Center September 21-23, 2009. Co-hosted by the Genetics Policy Institute, Johns Hopkins University, the University System of Maryland, The Maryland Department of Business and Economic Development, TEDCO and the MSCRF, the Summit will unite the international stem cell community by fostering collaborations, promoting economic development and expediting the journey from the laboratory to the clinic.

Key Dates

- Peer Review: March 2009
- Commission Decision: April 2009
- Earliest Anticipated Start: May/June 2009

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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