



Media Contact:
Kathleen Shaffer
410-902-5053
kshaffer@mghus.com

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Maryland Stem Cell Research Commission Receives 141 Applications for Funding

41 applications propose collaborative projects between for-profits and not-for-profits in response to the Commission's request

COLUMBIA, Md. (Jan. 20, 2010) – The Maryland Stem Cell Research Commission (Commission) has received 141 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. 41 of those applications propose collaborative projects between for-profits and not-for-profits which are given priority during the selection process.

“Strong interest and demand for Maryland's stem cell research program is demonstrated year after year by the number of applications submitted to the fund,” said Governor Martin O’Malley. “The Maryland Stem Cell Research Fund holds great promise for not only medical and scientific breakthroughs to be discovered right here in our state, but for economic development and job creation. Even in this uncertain economy, stem cell research is a sound and important investment for the State of Maryland.”

“The Commission is pleased with the number of applications received and we are extremely optimistic about the projects proposing collaborative research,” said Karen Rothenberg, chair of the Commission. “We strongly believe that collaboration and partnership is essential to the success of Maryland's stem cell program and this response further demonstrates our unified effort to advance innovative research.”

RFAs issued by the Commission for FY 2010 include:

- 20 applications for RFA-MD-10-1 (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 \$1 million of direct costs over a two-to-five year project. 12 of these applications proposed collaborative projects.
- 77 applications for RFA-MD-10-2 (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. 13 of these applications propose a

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collaborative project or were submitted by a for-profit company. However, preference is not given to collaborative projects in this funding category.

- 44 applications for RFA-MD-10-03 (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 be for up to \$55,000 of direct, indirect and fringe benefits costs per year, for up to two years. 16 of these applications proposed collaborative research.

The total request for all FY 2010 Maryland stem cell research applications was more than \$45 million. The Commission received 193 Letters of Intent from potential applicants in November 2009 – the largest response in the history of the Fund.

The Commission also announced today the availability of its calendar year 2009 annual report of the Maryland Stem Cell Research Fund. The annual MSCRF report identifies the 140 award grantees from the FY2007, FY2008, and FY2009 funding cycles, provides abstracts (as written by the respective principal investigators) of the research being performed, and the amount of funding each grantee received. All FY2009 MSCRF awardees presented their findings at the Second Annual Maryland Stem Cell Research Symposium which took place at World Stem Cell Summit in Baltimore this past September. Over the last three years, the MSRF has committed \$56 million to stem cell researchers in Maryland. The full report can be accessed at <http://www.msrf.org/content/awardees/index.cfm>.

The Maryland Stem Cell Research Fund was established to promote state-funded stem cell research and has a FY 2010 budget of \$12.4 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.

Key Dates

- Peer Review: March 2010
- Commission Decision: May 2010
- Earliest Anticipated Start: June 2010

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 \$12.4 million for FY 2010, the Commission will support grants to public and private entities in the State. The Commission will host the Third Annual Maryland Stem Cell Research

Symposium on Sept. 22, 2010 at the National Institute for Standards and Technology (NIST) in Gaithersburg, Md. 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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