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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Maryland Stem Cell Research Commission Receives Record Interest for Fourth Year of Funding

Commission receives 193 Letters of Intent, largest response in the history of the Maryland Stem Cell Research Fund

COLUMBIA, Md. (Nov. 19, 2009) – The Maryland Stem Cell Research Commission (Commission) has received 193 Letters of Intent in response to its three official Requests for Applications (RFAs) for the fourth year of funding through the Maryland Stem Cell Research Fund (MSCRF) under the Maryland Stem Cell Research Act of 2006. This is the largest number of Letters of Intent received in the history of the program.

“Maryland is clearly making an impression in the national stem cell research community and beyond,” said Governor Martin O’Malley. “Our state has demonstrated continued commitment to advancing stem cell research through our support for to the Maryland Stem Cell Research Fund and the impressive findings of our researchers as presented at the 2009 World Stem Cell Summit. Our sustained investment in this lifesaving field, and the national interest in our state’s program, will fuel future economic development and job creation in the State of Maryland.”

“The tremendous response to our request for Letters of Intent is a testament to the reputation and credibility of Maryland’s stem cell research program, said Karen Rothenberg, chair of the Commission.” The Commission is eager to receive the applications that will follow these letters and looks forward to the work ahead.”

The Letter of Intent is a required component for funding from the MSCRF, which is \$12.4 for FY 2010. Governor O’Malley has designated stem cell research funding a priority through the BIO 2020 Initiative. During the third year of funding (FY 2009), the Commission received 187 Letters of Intent that translated to 147 applications. Filing a Letter of Intent does not obligate the company or researcher to submit an application, and it is intended to help the Commission plan for the necessary Scientific Peer Review after the applications are submitted. Of the Letters of Intent received:

- 35 were 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. The Commission received 38 applications for this RFA last year. **A high priority will be given to collaborative projects between for-profits and not-for-profits.**
- 102 were 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

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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. The Commission received 70 applications for this RFA last year.

- 56 were for RFA-MD-10-3 (Post-Doctoral 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. The Commission received 39 applications for this RFA last year. **Highest priority will be given to scientifically meritorious applications that include collaboration between for-profit and not-for-profit organizations in the state.**

For a full set of application guidelines, please visit www.mscref.org. Applications for funding under these three RFA's are due on Jan. 14, 2010. The Commission will announce award decisions in May 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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