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Maryland Stem Cell Research Commission Funds 29 New Research Proposals in FY 2015

Awards address diseases and conditions such as diabetes, Gaucher, Alzheimer's, Parkinson's, mental disorders, autism, and obesity

Columbia, Md. (June 10, 2015) – The Maryland Stem Cell Research Commission (Commission) has completed its review of the 175 applications received in response to its FY 2015 Requests for Applications (RFAs). The board of directors of the Maryland Technology Development Corporation (TEDCO) approved the Commission's recommendation to fund 29 new proposals with the Maryland Stem Cell Research Fund's (MSCRF) \$9.4 million FY2015 budget. These projects show promise of contributing to cures for some of today's most debilitating diseases and conditions such as diabetes, vascular disease, Gaucher, Alzheimer's, Parkinson's, diseases treatable by bone marrow, autism, and obesity.

Since its establishment in 2006, the Commission has had the goal of promoting State-funded stem cell research and cures through grants to public and private entities in the State. Recently the researchers at Johns Hopkins performed a half-match bone marrow transplant that was funded by Maryland Stem Cell Research Fund. This pioneering procedure successfully treated Shauna Whisenton's sickle cell disease and gave her a new lease on life. To learn more about a sickle cell success story, click [here](#).

This year's MSCRF awards include:

- **1 Pre-Clinical Research Award** – This funding mechanism provides up to \$500,000 over up to three years and is designed for companies conducting pre-clinical research in Maryland that seek to advance medical therapies in the State. The award in this category will focus on chronic granulomatous disease (CGD).
- **8 Investigator-Initiated Research Awards** – These grants provide up to \$600,000 of direct costs for up to three years, and are designed for Maryland investigators who have preliminary data to support their hypotheses. The awardees in this category will focus on Parkinson's, aplastic anemia, Gaucher disease, bone marrow transplantation, amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS), heart disease and traumatic brain injury.
- **11 Exploratory Research Awards** – These grants provide up to \$200,000 of direct costs for up to two years, and are designed for Maryland researchers who are new to the stem cell field (young investigators and scientists from other fields), or for exploratory projects that have little or no preliminary data. FY 2015 awards in this category will address such topics as Alzheimer's,

Parkinson's, mental disorders, peripheral vascular disease, spinal cord injury, obesity, diabetes, diseases treatable by bone marrow, and amyotrophic lateral sclerosis.

- **9 Post Doctoral Fellowship Awards** - These grants provide up to \$110,000 for up to two years, including direct and indirect costs and fringe benefits, and are designed for post-doctoral fellows who wish to conduct human stem cell research in Maryland. FY 2015 awards in this category will address such topics as schizophrenia, obesity, heart, ALS, autism and mental disorders.

"We were very impressed with the quality of the applications this year for these important research grants," said Rabbi Avram Reisner, Chair of the Commission. "Each of these awardees represents one of the keys to the future of regenerative medicine. The Commission is grateful to Governor Hogan and our legislators for their continued support of stem cell research as we demonstrate a clear connection between innovative medical research and economic development in the state of Maryland. "

For a complete list of the names of the Principal Investigators (PIs), their project titles and institutions, please visit <http://www.mscref.org/content/awardees/2015Awardees.cfm> .

All MSCRF-funded research must be conducted in Maryland and must involve human stem cells.

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 current MSCRF budget for FY2016 is \$9.4 million. 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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