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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Maryland Stem Cell Research Commission Elects Margaret Conn Himelfarb as Chair

COLUMBIA, Md. (July 9, 2010) – The Maryland Stem Cell Research Commission (Commission) today announced that it has elected Margaret Conn Himelfarb as chair and Bowen P. Weisheit, Jr. as vice chair. Himelfarb, who has a master's degree in Public Health, is an editor and medical research advocate. She was appointed to the Commission by Governor Martin O'Malley in 2008. Himelfarb succeeds Karen Rothenberg, who completed her two-year term as chair of the Commission.

“Margaret is one of the state’s most passionate medical research advocates. I congratulate her for being appointed to this leadership position within the Maryland Stem Cell Research Commission,” said Governor Martin O’Malley. “Under the direction of Karen Rothenberg, the Commission has worked to make our state’s program nationally and internationally renowned. I thank Karen for her outstanding leadership and look forward to the fund continuing to attract the best and brightest stem cell researchers under Margaret’s tenure.”

Himelfarb was unanimously selected to the position at the Commission’s first organizational meeting for FY 2011. She currently sits on the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health's Institutional Review Board and Health Advisory Board and is a member of the Johns Hopkins School of Medicine Institutional Stem Cell Research Oversight Committee. She became involved in medical advocacy when her son was diagnosed with juvenile diabetes at the age of four and has testified before the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) on diabetes-related matters. Himelfarb has served on the Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation (JDRF) International Board as well as various advisory committees for the National Institutes of Health (NIH). She also reviews research grants for JDRF.

"I am honored to serve as chair of the Maryland Stem Cell Research Commission and will make every effort to adhere to the high standards of oversight and advocacy set by my predecessors, Linda Powers and Karen Rothenberg," said Himelfarb. "I look forward to working with TEDCO and the members of the Commission to maximize the economic impact of the Maryland Stem Cell Research Fund and further its mission to promote the most scientifically meritorious stem cell research in Maryland focused on understanding, preventing, treating, and eradicating devastating human diseases and disabilities."

Weisheit is a board member of the Maryland Chapter of the Cystic Fibrosis Foundation and a lawyer with the Law Office of Bowen Weisheit, Jr. He has been a member of the Commission since its inception.

In FY 2010, the Commission awarded 40 stem cell research grants. With a budget of \$10.4 million for FY 2011, the Commission expects to issue formal Requests for Applications (RFAs) in late September 2010. It will also host the third Annual Maryland Stem Cell Research Symposium on Wednesday, Sept. 22, 2010 at the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) in Gaithersburg. This year’s

symposium is being held in partnership with NIST, NIH, Johns Hopkins University and the University System of Maryland. For more information on the symposium, please visit www.mscref.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 \$10.4 million for FY 2011, 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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