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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Maryland Stem Cell Research Commission Hosts Fifth Annual Maryland Stem Cell Research Symposium in Annapolis

Symposium provides an opportunity for the public to learn more about State-funded stem cell research programs

Annapolis, Md. (Oct. 4, 2012) – Starting today, more than 350 scientists, researchers, bioethicists, patient advocates, government officials and members of the public will come together in Annapolis, Md., for the **Fifth Annual Maryland Stem Cell Research Symposium** presented by the Maryland Stem Cell Research Commission (Commission) and the Anne Arundel Economic Development Corporation. The two-day event will feature plenary sessions, concurrent presentations, and poster exhibits presented by more than 100 researchers supported by the Maryland Stem Cell Research Fund (MSCRF). The agenda also includes workshops and networking opportunities.

This year's Symposium features such topics as stem cell derived disease models, bioengineered tissue and organ repair, and neural stem cells. Scientists from a wide variety of disciplines will discuss promising research advances and breakthroughs in the treatment of heart disease, spinal cord injury, multiple sclerosis, schizophrenia, Parkinson's disease and Progeria Syndrome (extreme premature aging) among other costly diseases and conditions.

"Our Symposium showcases the pioneering work of Maryland's top stem cell biologists and offers researchers at academic institutions and private companies the opportunity to share ideas and information about the latest developments in this rapidly evolving field," said Margaret Conn Himelfarb, MPH, chair of the Commission. "This year's Symposium is a two-day event, allowing more time for intellectual exchange, in-depth workshops on grant writing, research regulations and funding as well as networking opportunities that facilitate collaboration and promote best practices."

One of the highlights of the Symposium will be the Kellermann Memorial Lecture, honoring the late stem cell research patient advocate and founding Commission member John L. Kellermann III. This year's address will be delivered by Dr. Ole Isacson, professor of neurology and neuroscience at Harvard Medical School and director of the Neuroregeneration Laboratories and Center for Neuroregeneration Research at McLean Hospital. His talk will focus on new stem cell based therapies for Parkinson's disease. Maryland House Speaker Michael E. Busch will deliver remarks following the Kellermann Lecture.

Today, the Commission also will announce its four research funding programs for 2013. Requests for Applications (RFAs) include: Investigator-Initiated Grants, Exploratory Grants, Post-Doctoral Fellowships, and Pre-Clinical and Clinical Grants, a new funding mechanism designed to support for-profit companies. This funding cycle, all research proposals must pertain to regenerative medicine. Priority will be given to translational projects. Details about these funding opportunities can be found at http://www.mscrf.org/content/fundingopps/index.cfm.

"As an organization that promotes and supports economic development, we are extremely pleased to host this year's Maryland Stem Cell Research Symposium," said Robert Hannon, president and CEO of the Anne Arundel Economic Development Corporation. "Programs like the MSCRF help make Maryland-based

researchers leaders in bioscience, and further develop the State's innovation economy. It's an honor for Anne Arundel County to play a role in this event."

NOTE TO EDITORS:

- Photographs of symposium events and VIP speakers can be obtained by contacting Kelly Cahill at (410) 504-8312 or kcahill@mghus.com.

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 FY2013 is $10.4 million. For more information about the Maryland Stem Cell Research Fund and a list of Commission members, please visit www.mscrf.org.

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