

Minutes of the Maryland Stem Cell Research Commission

Thursday, September 20, 2007

UMBC South Campus Seminar Conference Room

Members in attendance:

Brenda Crabbs
Gloria Marrow
Suzanne Ostrand-Rosenberg
Linda Powers, Chair
Karen Rothenberg
Murray Sachs
Steven Salzberg
Jack Schwartz
Jeremy Sugarman
Joel Zaiman

Others in attendance:

Dan Gincel (TEDCO)
Linda Saffer (TEDCO)
Ira Schwartz (OAG)
Renee Winsky (TEDCO)

The Commission meeting was called to order at 2:08 p.m.

I. Approval of Minutes

The commission considered the minutes of May 15, 2007. A motion was made and seconded to approve the minutes as submitted. The motion passed unanimously.

II. Administrative Report

TEDCO staff provided an update on administrative activities. To date, no funding has been distributed to researchers pending receipt of Institutional Review Board and IACUC approvals, as required by statute. Since August when a draft grant agreement was distributed to the respective institutions, comments and concerns have been received by TEDCO. These are being addressed.

III. Discussion of FY2008 Requests for Applications (RFAs)

1. Budget Justification

TEDCO staff explained that many investigators had questions regarding moving funding within budget categories. After careful consideration, the Commission took the following action:

- A. A motion was made and seconded to allow grant recipients to move up to 10% between budget categories. The motion passed 9 in favor and 1 against.
- B. A motion was made and seconded to allow recipients to move funds within an existing budget category without further TEDCO or Stem Cell Commission approval. The motion passed unanimously.
- C. A motion was made and seconded to allow recipients to move funds between categories in excess of 10% with TEDCO approval and consultation with the Stem Cell Commission. The motion passed unanimously.

2. Letter of Intent

The Commission deliberated whether a Letter of Intent should be required for FY2008 funding. A motion was made and seconded to make a Letter of Intent mandatory and to include a menu of keywords in the instructions for applicants to use in the Letters. The motion passed 8 in favor and 1 abstention.

3. Salary Cap

A motion was made and seconded to enforce the NIH maximum salary cap. The motion passed unanimously.

4. Company Applicants

The current statute identifies three objectives of the program:

1. Supporting science
2. Getting treatment to patients
3. Supporting the Biotechnology industry in the state of Maryland.

The Commission discussed a number of options to encourage biotech companies to apply for funding and how to truly judge the impact of the biotech industry in Maryland. A motion was made and seconded to allow TEDCO staff the latitude to add appropriate language and placement in the RFA document to clarify the requirements. The motion passed 8 in favor and 1 abstention.

5. Translational Research

Commissioners agreed that there are many definitions of “translational” research. They also agreed that the reference to translational research should be more prominent in the document. The following action was taken:

- A. A motion was made and seconded not include examples of research for any type of research, basic or translational. The motion passed unanimously.

- B. A motion was made and seconded to add more labels, e.g., applied research, and to add a statement encouraging applicants to include work that will move treatment safely and rapidly to the patient. The motion passed 5 in favor, 4 against.

IV. Discussion of New Requests for Applications (RFAs)

The Commission discussed the idea to add two new RFAs to the Stem Cell Program: a fellowship grant and a shared resources grant. The Commission appointed two ad hoc groups to explore the subject and will continue to discuss the new RFA in their next meeting.

V. Deadlines and Meeting Schedule

A. The Commission approved the following deadlines for the FY2008 Request For Applications Timeline:

- October 1, 2007 – Release date for RFAs
- November 15, 2007 – Submission for the mandatory Letters of Intent
- January 15, 2008 – Application submission due date
- Exact Scientific Peer Review Meeting dates will be determined

B. Commission Meeting Schedule

- Tuesday, October 9, 2007, 2pm-5pm
- Thursday, November 15, 2007, 2pm-5pm
- Tuesday, December 11, 2007, 2pm-5pm

The meeting adjourned at 5:10 p.m.