FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Maryland Stem Cell Research Commission Receives Increased Interest in Second Round of Funding

Commission receives 127 Letters of Intent, 38 more than last year

COLUMBIA, Md. (Dec. 12, 2007) – The Maryland Stem Cell Research Commission (Commission) has received 127 Letters of Intent in response to its two official Requests for Applications (RFAs) for the second round of funding through the Maryland Stem Cell Research Fund under the Maryland Stem Cell Research Act of 2006. New to this year's application process, the Letter of Intent is a required component for funding from the Maryland Stem Cell Research Fund, which is \$23 million for FY 2008. During the first year of funding (2007), the Commission received 89 Letters of Intent that translated to 86 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:

- 46 were for RFA-MD-07-1 (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 \$500,000 of direct costs per
 year, for up to three years. The Commission received 41 applications for this RFA last
 year.
- 81 were for RFA-MD-07-2 (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 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 45 applications for this RFA last year.

Consistent with NIH practices and the general guidance in the Maryland Stem Cell Research Act of 2006 to follow NIH practices where relevant and appropriate, the Commission considers the Letter of Intent to be part of a pending competing grant application and does not release specific application data until awards are made.

The grants to be awarded under these two RFAs will fund basic and translational research with human stem cells of all types, as defined in the Maryland Stem Cell Research Act of 2006. The goals of this program are to broaden and advance basic knowledge of human stem cell biology that will be relevant for eventual development of clinical applications, and to enable, support and accelerate such clinical applications for prevention, diagnosis and treatment of human diseases and conditions. **Applications for funding under these RFAs are due on Jan. 15, 2008.**

Maryland-based organizations of all types are eligible for Investigator-Initiated and Exploratory Research Grants. Such organizations include public and private, for-profit and nonprofit, universities, colleges, research institutes, companies, medical centers and others.

The work funded under the two RFAs must be conducted in Maryland. The scientists and clinicians conducting the work must be employed or retained by an eligible Maryland-based organization while doing so. Such employment or retainer may be permanent or temporary, full-time or part-time. Individuals from underrepresented minorities and individuals with disabilities are encouraged to apply.

All applications must include an explanation of the translation potential and/or plan of the proposed research. Translation potential means the relevance and potential utility of the research (including basic research) for clinical applications for patients. A translation plan means the anticipated process for accomplishing such clinical applications.

All principal investigators funded under these RFAs will be required to present their interim and final research results at an annual in-state symposium, and in annual reports to the Commission.

Key Dates

Application Receipt Deadline: Jan. 15, 2008

Peer Review: March 2008

Commission Decision: April 2008Earliest Anticipated Start: July 2008

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 \$23 million budget for FY 2008, 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.MarylandTEDCO.org.

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