

**Empire State Stem Cell Board**  
**Funding Committee Meeting**  
**Minutes**

**October 22, 2007**  
**3:30 PM- 4:45 PM**

The first meeting of the Empire State Stem Cell Board Funding Committee was held on Monday, October 22, 2007 at the New York Academy of Sciences Conference Center, 7 World Trade Center, New York, New York. Commissioner Richard F. Daines, M.D., presided as Chairperson.

**Funding Committee Members Present:**

Dr. Richard Daines, Chairperson  
Mr. Kenneth Adams  
Dr. Bradford Berk  
Dr. Richard Dutton  
Mr. Robin Elliott  
Dr. David Hohn  
Dr. Hilda Hutcherson  
Dr. Michael Stocker  
Dr. Harold Varmus

**Ethics Committee Members Present:**

Fr. Thomas Vincent Berg  
Ms. Brooke Ellison  
Dr. Samuel Gorovitz  
Dr. Robert Klitzman  
Rev. H. Hugh Maynard-Reid  
Dr. Daniel Sulmasy  
Mr. Robert Swidler

**Department of Health Staff Present:**

Dr. David Anders  
Ms. Bonnie Brautigam  
Mr. Thomas Conway  
Ms. Judy Doeschate  
Dr. Carmen Mannella  
Ms. Diane Mathis

Ms. Marti McHugh  
Ms. Amy Nickson  
Dr. Tia Powell  
Ms. Beth Roxland  
Ms. Wendy Saunders  
Dr. Lawrence Sturman  
Ms. Mary Szesnat  
Dr. Jill Taylor  
Ms. Joann Wells  
Dr. Ann Willey  
Ms. Katherine Zdeb

**Special Guests Present:**

Lt. Gov. David Paterson  
Dr. Jonathan Moreno

**Observers Present:**

Mr. Robert Cohen  
Ms. Jean Ellison  
Mr. Edward Ellison  
Mr. Robert Feldman  
Ms. Janet Felleman  
Mr. Ross Frommer  
Mr. Matthew Haiken  
Ms. Amy Happ  
Ms. Julia Rubin  
Mr. Mark Leinung  
Mr. Jack Linville  
Ms. Crystal Mainiero  
Mr. Michael Manganiello  
Ms. Kathleen McNulty  
Ms. Elizabeth Misa  
Ms. Taylor Palumbo  
Ms. Kelly Ryan  
Ms. Susan Solomon

Chairman Daines called the meeting of the Funding Committee to order and invited members of the Ethics Committee to stay and participate informally.

## **Initial Grant Options**

Dr. Daines noted that Dr. Sturman and his staff had developed a couple options for the Funding Committee to consider for initial funding mechanisms that would allow the Committee to make awards in the current fiscal year. He then turned the floor over to Dr. Sturman to describe the two funding proposals submitted to the Funding Committee.

Dr. Sturman noted that copies of the most recent edition of both proposals were distributed to Board members at the start of the meeting. He first presented the proposal entitled “Grants for Institutional Development of Stem Cell Research Capabilities.” He stated that the proposal was developed taking into consideration several areas he thought there could be agreement on for early funding. One area he identified is funding for training because many institutions have good investigators that would like to get into this area, but they need training. Another area is institutional infrastructure and development. A primary purpose of this funding would be to maintain the community of scientists that are already engaged in this area of research. Some of these scientists may be awaiting renewal of grants and could benefit from what is commonly referred to as “bridge funding” until they receive additional funding from other sources. Others may have received grants, but did not have those grants fully funded or may need supplemental funding for equipment, shared core facilities, and other support. Dr. Sturman noted that the purpose of funding these types of activities quickly is to make sure we don’t lose the momentum we have in New York State. We want to build on the programs we have while we train others and strengthen collaborations.

Dr. Sturman highlighted the significant provisions of the proposal. He noted the proposal is designed to ensure that institutions that have received at least a million dollars in combined NIH and NSF funding in 2006 would qualify for the funding and that approximately 70 institutions would qualify. Eligible institutions would fall into two categories. Institutions with no current stem cell research funding can apply for up to \$100,000 for training to be taken at any institution conducting stem cell research inside, or outside of, New York State. Institutions with current stem cell research funding, can apply for up to a million dollars. However, no institution may receive more than one percent of their combined NIH and NSF 2006 funding. He noted that the proposal also now includes a provision for a minimum award of \$100,000 for eligible institutions performing stem cell research. Institutions currently conducting stem cell research could use the funds for bridge funding, supplemental funds to existing grants, training, equipment, and core facilities. However, bridge funding and supplemental funding are limited to research that has already been peer reviewed. Applicants will be required to submit documentation of prior peer reviews to ensure we are only supporting research that has been deemed meritorious. Eligible institutions can develop their requests for funding for training, equipment, core facilities, bridge funding, and supplemental funding, in whatever way they feel best serves their institution in furthering stem cell research. The proposal also includes a requirement for an in-kind match of 25 percent.

Dr. Sturman also highlighted the provisions at the bottom of page four that requires applicants using human embryonic stem cells to provide evidence that the research project

has been approved by the Embryonic Stem Cell Research Oversight Committee (ESCRO) responsible for ethical and scientific oversight of stem cell research at the institution where the research is being conducted. The applicant must also comply with any additional standards for stem cell research approved by the Empire State Stem Cell Board Funding Committee on or before December 31<sup>st</sup>, which will reflect consideration of any recommendations made by the Ethics Committee. He noted that this will give the Ethics Committee and Funding Committee additional time to consider other standards for funded research that uses human embryonic stem cells. Finally, Dr. Sturman noted that if the proposal meets with the Funding Committee's approval, the solicitation letter could go out next month and the Department could announce the awards in March or earlier. Dr. Sturman asked Committee members for their thoughts or questions.

Several members commended Dr. Sturman for bringing forth a proposal that allows the Board to begin funding worthy research in the near future to encourage stem cell scientists to remain in New York State and to expand training and support for stem cell research. Members also expressed support for the proposal's use of an appropriate formula to provide greater levels of funding to institutions with more research capacity. One Board member suggested the Board consider issuing a subsequent proposal that would benefit smaller institutions while still relying on prior peer review, and another inquired whether the initiative was committing an appropriate amount this year given the large amount of funding available.

In response to Committee members' questions, Dr. Sturman clarified that all applications submitted for funding for activities meeting the requirements of the proposal would be funded, and that the Department planned to inform all 70 potentially eligible institutions through a direct mailing containing the complete application, and through publishing a notice in the State Contract Reporter. The application would also be available on-line. He said the Department hoped that this approach would encourage many researchers to come into the field, which is a dire objective of the State's stem cell funding initiative.

During the discussion of the institutional development grant proposal, several members suggested that smaller institutions would benefit from the consortia proposal also provided to Committee members. As a result, Dr. Sturman also provided an overview of that proposal which is intended to foster collaborations amongst researchers across the state. The proposal would require at least three institutions to be involved in the consortia, at least two of which must be located in New York State. The first phase of the proposal would provide grants to successful applicants to develop plans for a multi-institutional consortia. The resulting plans would then be peer reviewed to narrow the number of consortias funded through the Empire State Stem Cell Trust Fund to a maximum of five. Dr. Sturman noted that the proposal has been designed to allow for a lot of flexibility. The Department is hoping that some consortia are disease-based, but some may focus on fundamental mechanisms of development and differentiation, or be rooted in other themes. The consortia requirements would include the development of a leadership team, long-range strategic plan, with a mission, an action plan, opportunities and outcome measures. They would also be required to conduct community outreach and educational activities. Dr. Sturman noted that

at this point, the proposal is only a concept paper that needs further development, and solicited input from Committee members.

During the discussion that ensued Committee members expressed a variety of views, including not restricting applicants for the consortia grants to those who were successful in the planning grant phase; retaining flexibility in the number of consortia that might be funded and the amounts of the potential awards; not limiting consortia to disease-based themes and letting researchers decide; not committing as much of the yearly budget for the program to consortia; and holding workshops and conference to create a broad awareness of the consortia opportunities available to all institutions. Members also expressed preference for the Board expending more funds on education and training programs, including at the undergraduate level.

Dr. Daines then returned to the institutional development grant proposal and asked for a motion to authorize the Department to issue the solicitation for applications for the Grants for Institutional Development of Stem Cell Research Capabilities. Dr. Varmus indicated that he would prefer to see the actual application before voting on the proposal and inquired whether the Dr. Sturman could prepare the application expeditiously, circulate it to Committee members and then have the Committee vote on it by mail ballot. Ms. Doesschate clarified that the Committee needed to vote to approve the proposal in the open meeting, but could do so contingent on members finding the specific language in the application acceptable. She stated that the substance of the proposal provided to the members will not be changed, but that it will be accompanied by standard New York State and Department of Health appendices. She acknowledged members could comment on the application form itself as long as the substance did not change. Dr. Berk so moved; and Dr. Stocker seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Dr. Daines then asked for a motion on the multi-institutional consortia proposal, to simply move the concept forward for further refinement. Mr. Elliot so moved and Dr. Berk seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

### **Development of Future Agenda Items**

Dr. Daines asked Committee members to help clarify what items should be considered for the next meeting of the Funding Committee. He noted that one is the intellectual property issue. Dr. Varmus asked that that issue be linked to consideration of sharing of data and publication practices. An additional training proposal was also requested. Dr. Daines noted that staff will also be consulting on the strategic planning process.

Dr. Daines closed the meeting by thanking Board members for their participation in a long, productive day, and, upon observing everyone packing up, declared the meeting adjourned by unanimous consent.

*Approved: December 13, 2007*