

APPROVED November 15, 2007

## **Minutes of the Maryland Stem Cell Research Commission**

**Tuesday, October 9, 2007**

**Sheraton Columbia Hotel Conference Room**

### **Members in attendance:**

Brenda Crabbs  
Diane Griffin  
John Kellermann  
Gloria Marrow  
Linda Powers, Chair  
Karen Rothenberg  
Murray Sachs  
Steven Salzberg  
Jack Schwartz  
Jeremy Sugarman  
Bowen Weisheit

### **Others in attendance:**

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

The Commission meeting was called to order at 2:10 p.m.

### **I. Approval of Minutes**

The Commission considered the minutes of September 20, 2007. The commission requested an amendment to the minutes to include the discussion of the new Requests for Applications (RFA's). A motion was made and seconded to approve the minutes with the specified amendment. The motion passed unanimously.

### **II. Administrative Report**

TEDCO staff provided an update on administrative activities. To date, TEDCO has begun the signing process of the grant agreements, which will continue throughout the coming weeks until all of the grant recipient institutions have signed. A public notice was released on October 1, 2007 regarding the new RFA's for Investigator-Initiated and Exploratory grants. The Maryland Stem Cell Research Fund web page has been

updated which includes the public notice, the two RFA's, and the letter of intent instructions.

### **III. Peer Review Process: Presentation and Discussion**

A power point presentation was made by Fred Heydrick, an independent contractor to TEDCO with scientific peer review experience. The following topics were covered:

- 1) NIH's Center for scientific review (CSR)
- 2) Peer review in CSR
- 3) The duties of a scientific review officer
- 4) Criteria for selection of peer reviewers
- 5) The importance of the Certification of Confidentiality and Non-Disclosure
- 6) Peer reviewers grant research criteria
- 7) Important considerations for review regarding Human subjects, animal subjects and hazardous conditions
- 8) Definition of the study section / NIH scientific review group actions.
- 9) The summary statement format
- 10) MSCRF's scientific peer review process

The Commission discussed the structural aspect of the study sections and its comparability between the Exploratory and Investigator-Initiated Grant applications. There was consensus that the study groups should remain divided by Exploratory and Investigator-Initiated Grant applications.

Traditionally, stem cell research projects raise ethical questions, which is why the Commission was structured to include members with ethical expertise. Due to potential Conflict of Interest issues, the Commission suggested that ethical expertise be added to the study sections. Commission members volunteered to offer suggestions on possible out-of-state reviewers who will provide at the core review.

The Commission discussed the issue of translational versus basic research. Translation is meant to be a very important part of the Maryland program. One of the distinguishing characteristics of Maryland's program is to establish a balance between translational and basic research. Due to the various definitions and understandings of the word, establishing the preferred balance is creating a problem due to the lack of understanding of the legislative definition of the word "translational." The Commission suggested the option to create a sub-committee to establish a working definition of translational research for the Commission to use and stipulate for grant proposals.

### **IV. Discussion on Additional Requests for Applications (RFAs)**

The Commission discussed two options for new RFA's for this funding cycle. The first would establish a Fellowship Grant. The purpose would be to train new stem cell

researchers. The second would establish a grant for state funded shared resources necessary to support the basic and translational research funded by the MSCRF. TEDCO staff was directed to draft language for a possible Fellowship Grant RFA and to draft a Request for Information to see what the need might be for shared space in Maryland. There was consensus amongst the Commissioners that using the remainder of funding from FY2007 for these initiatives may be a good way to build the stem cell research community in Maryland.

**V. Topics to be Discussed**

- A. Finalize next meeting dates for 2008
- B. Update on the current estimated amount of the grant funds carried over from the first cycle / quarter of grant disbursements.
- C. Further discussion on the definition of translational research.

The meeting adjourned at 4:20 p.m.