



NYSTEM and Empire State Stem Cell Board Activities

May 1, 2009 through October 1, 2009

Prepared for the

Interstate Alliance on Stem Cell Research

Update on Funding Activities

The Empire State Stem Cell Board (ESSCB) continues to follow its Strategic Plan for the expenditure of funds which prioritized funding for: research; scientific training; infrastructure development; ethical, legal, social issues and education; and administration.

On July 8th the NYSTEM program released two RFAs committing \$21.5 million to support targeted projects in hESC research and boarder investigator-initiated research projects. 210 applications have been received in response to these RFAs. Awards are expected to be made in early 2010.

Two additional RFAs were issued on August 27th. One will make another \$15 million available for shared research facilities and the other will provide up to \$5.4 million for five fellow-to-faculty awards to help transition promising postdoctoral fellows to independent research careers.

On October 26th, the Funding Committee is expected to make awards to institutions for undergraduate curriculum development relating to stem cell research and summer undergraduate internships in stem cell science. A total of \$5.2 million has been committed to support these awards.

The Funding Committee has also approved the issuance of two additional RFAs committing \$9.6 million to support fellowships and pre- and post-doctoral training.

The Funding Committee is in discussions about additional RFAs/RFPs that will include funding for medical, dental and veterinary student training programs; investigator exchange/sabbatical; consortia; museum exhibits/other forms of public education; and public-private partnerships.

To date, the ESSCB has made awards and approved the issuance of RFAs totaling \$175.5 million. Current state fiscal constraints have primarily affected administrative activities, such as limiting travel and the hiring of staff. These have not affected the funding available for the contracts or approved projects.

Scientific Conferences

NYSTEM held its first scientific conference for the initial group funded scientists on June 12, 2009 in Albany. A meeting of the consortium planning grant awardees was also held on September 8, 2009 in New York City.

Stem Cell Awareness Day

Governor David A. Paterson issued a proclamation declaring September 23, 2009 Stem Cell Awareness Day in New York State. NYSTEM staff arranged for a public showing of the film “Terra Incognita” in Albany, which was followed by a discussion of the film. Staff also conducted a stem cell image contest via its website and received over 50 images. Twelve were selected for inclusion in a NYSTEM calendar for 2010 that can be downloaded from the NYSTEM website.

Update on Policy Initiatives and Statements

The Empire State Stem Cell Board issued a letter to NIH on May 26, 2009 commenting on the draft NIH standards. In the spring, the Funding Committee adopted the Ethics Committee’s recommendations for specific informed consent standards, and at its June 11th meeting, the Funding Committee adopted the Ethics Committee’s recommendations for standards applicable to payments for gamete donors donating solely for research. The Board also issued a statement explaining some of the rationale behind this decision. More information will be provided on the development of these standards and statements in the October 8th presentation on New York’s experience. The Board’s statement, policies and minutes from the meetings where these policies were developed are also posted on the NYSTEM webpage at www.stemcell.ny.gov.

Intellectual Property and Economic Development Workgroup

In the spring and early summer of 2009 the ESSCB convened a workgroup to examine issues related to business development, economic development and the role of government in technology transfer. The workgroup heard from researchers, businesses, academic institutions, and attorneys from across the State and the country and gathered information that will be used by the Board as it continues to develop policies and funding mechanisms to foster a strong stem cell research community in New York State.

Public Access and Accountability

ESSCB meetings continue to be webcasted live and are available on-line 30 days after each meeting. NYSTEM’s website has been updated regularly with meeting minutes, RFA/RFP, policy updates, FAQ’s and related information. NYSTEM has also converted its listing of New York State stem cell scientists into a searchable database that is accessible to the public on the NYSTEM website. www.stemcell.ny.gov