

PRESS RELEASE

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NEW JERSEY STEM CELL RESEARCH & EDUCATION FOUNDATION LAUNCHES COLLABORATIVE PARTNERSHIP WITH WORLD CLASS NEW JERSEY-BASED MEDICAL, SCIENCE & ENGINEERING FACILITIES

Newark, NJ – The New Jersey Stem Cell Research & Education Foundation (NJSCREF) today announced the formation and launch of a collaborative “Bench to Bedside” strategic stem cell partnership with world class New Jersey-based players in medicine, science, technology and engineering.

Appearing at its host university, the New Jersey Institute of Technology, NJSCREF Founding Trustees New Jersey State Assemblyman Neil Cohen and Dr. Gary Friedman, along with NJSCREF President and CEO Dr. Michael LaSalle and representatives from the collaborating institutions today revealed that NJSCREF is leading an historic strategic partnership with major members NJIT, the Center for Applied Genomics of the Public Health Research Institute, the University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey’s (UMDNJ) New Jersey School of Medicine and the Coriell Institute for Medical Research.

Assemblyman Neil Cohen (D-Union County, NJ) stated, “As the author of New Jersey’s stem cell research law, it is extremely gratifying to participate in this world class effort. The model we launch today is unique in that it turns away from the traditional bricks and mortar approach to new starts and, instead, embraces a new vision that strategically leverages the intellectual capital and infrastructure already in place. This is a great day for New Jersey, for our nation and for humanity.”

Dr. Gary Friedman, an NJSCREF Founding Trustee and its Chief Science Officer and New Jersey-based practicing nephrologist and solid organ transplant physician said, “As a transplant physician, I know first-hand how desperately

mankind needs alternatives to the current state of medicine. Stem cell therapy is one of these clear alternatives with great near-term promise to provide relief to millions of people worldwide. Our shared vision has at its core a committed focus on rapid, responsible progress in bench to bedside stem cell therapies. We are united in our focus to deliver Regenerative Medicine therapeutics as quickly and safely as possible utilizing already-existing facilities within New Jersey. Today is a major step in that direction.”

Dr. Michael LaSalle, NJSCREF President and CEO and practicing urological micro-surgeon, commented, “It is truly a historic day for the State of New Jersey when world-class basic science researchers, engineers, clinicians, academic institutions and supporting industries can come together to work hand-in-hand for the purpose of advancing science and medicine. NJSCREF is privileged to become a strong foundation for this effort by coordinating a translational model for "bench to bedside" stem cell discovery and delivery with the intention of expediting stem cell healing to patients globally.”

The New Jersey Institute of Technology (NJIT) will serve as the host institution for this NJSCREF-coordinated effort. On behalf of NJIT, Dr. Don Sebastian, Senior Vice President of Research & Development said, "The translation of stem-cell science into stem-cell practice will require whole new technologies that are as revolutionary as Ford's assembly line was to automotive production. These are classic engineering functions, and NJIT is poised to engage these problems even as the science is being developed - so that the therapeutic benefits get those in need without delay. We at NJIT are very excited about our role in this historic endeavor.”

According to Dr. William Hunter, Chair of NJIT’s Department of Biomedical Engineering, whose focus includes biomaterials, regenerative medicine and neural engineering, “NJSCREF’s endorsement of our stem cell biomaterials research and technology development programs has already had a positive impact on our ability to form broad-based research collaborations.”

The strength of NJIT in the field of stem cell research is clearly demonstrated by the exemplary work performed by Treena Livingston Arinzeh, Ph.D., the recipient of the 2004 Presidential Early Career Award for Scientists and Engineers Award and the 2003 National Science Foundation Faculty Early Career Development Award and grant. Dr. Arinzeh, an NJIT Assistant Professor of Biomedical Engineering will be working closely with the NJSCREF collaborative strategic partnership. Dr. Arinzeh commented that, “my research is focused on the use of stem cells in combination with biomaterials as scaffolds for supporting and, ideally, promoting the differentiation of stem cells. Clinical areas of special interest include orthopedics and neural engineering for applications including, for example, the treatment of spinal cord injury. NJSCREF has already played a valuable role in encouraging my research in this area, and I look forward to continued and growing support from the Foundation.”

One of the major aspects of the NJSCREF-led strategic collaboration is the unique element provided by the Newark-based and internationally-renowned Center for Applied Genomics of the Public Health Research Institute. Patricia Soteropoulos, Ph.D., the Center's Managing Director emphasized that "The Center for Applied Genomics fully supports the mission of The New Jersey Stem Cell Research & Education Foundation (NJSCREF). We are the largest genomic center in the tri-state area and currently provide support to approximately 150 collaborators worldwide, many of whom, e.g., NJIT and UMDNJ, are located here in Newark. We look forward to further building our strategic partnership with NJSCREF through a growing number of research projects consistent with the Foundation's "bench to bedside" focus. Using the microarray resources available at the CAG, we are able to study the activity of stem cell genes and gene products on a genome-wide scale. The use of this technology will permit a greater understanding of stem cell biology, differentiation and the success or failure of treatment."

The New Jersey Medical School, a division of The University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey (UMDNJ), provides a dynamic clinical environment within which to advance the ultimate NJSCREF collaborative partnership vision: bedside regenerative medicine. University Hospital in Newark, Hackensack University Medical Center and the East Orange Veteran's Administration Hospital comprise The New Jersey Medical School's major affiliate teaching hospitals. On behalf of The New Jersey Medical School, in coordination with the New Jersey Medical School Dean's Office, Joseph V. DiTrollo, M.D., President of the New Jersey Medical School Alumni Association, a major medical research grantor, said, "The mission of New Jersey Medical School is to utilize the established Newark hospital campus complex along with our sister organizations for the benefit of stem cell research, education and treatment of the citizens of New Jersey. NJSCREF offers the perfect conduit for coordinating the assets of New Jersey Medical School with that of our sister universities and the private sector's need for competent, accurate and reproducible stem cell research."

In support of the NJSCREF strategic partnership, James M. Oleske, M.D., M.P.H., the UMDNJ Francois-Xavier Bagnoud Professor of Pediatrics and Director of the Division of Pulmonary, Allergy, Immunology and Infectious Diseases, observed, "If stem cell therapeutics can help eradicate HIV from the blood of a child, what greater goal can we ever hope for?"

The Coriell Institute for Medical Research, founded in 1953 and located in Camden, NJ, is an internationally renowned not-for-profit research institute. Coriell maintains the world's largest collection of human cells for research as well as the New Jersey Cord Blood Bank and major cryogenic storage facilities. Joseph L. Mintzer, Coriell's Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer

stated, "Coriell Institute's scientific vision and pioneering efforts have positioned the Institute to play a critical role in developing new therapeutic approaches to regenerative medicine using human stem cells. Coriell has made a commitment to researchers in establishing the New Jersey Cord Blood Bank (NJCBB) to supply nonembryonic stem cells for use in research. We fully endorse NJSCREF's mission of promoting stem cell healing and are committed to supporting the Foundation in any way we can. As NJSCREF's strategic partner, we intend to provide NJSCREF and its collaborators with a diverse array of well-characterized cell lines, world-class research expertise and an unmatched knowledge-base in the production, processing and storage of human stem cell lines."

NJSCREF was created in February 2004 as a non-profit vehicle to promote New Jersey-based stem cell research and education and the rapid "bench to bedside" development and delivery of stem cell therapies. NJSCREF, a nonprofit corporation organized and existing under the laws of the State of New Jersey, has been formed to qualify as a Section 501(c)(3) corporation under the Internal Revenue Code and is in the process of pursuing recognition of that status with the Internal Revenue Service.

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