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**FOR DISCUSSION PURPOSES ONLY**

**CONNECTICUT STEM CELL RESEARCH ADVISORY COMMITTEE**  
**Minutes – Regular Meeting**  
**Tuesday, August 16, 2011**

A regular meeting of the Connecticut Stem Cell Research Advisory Committee “Advisory Committee” was held on Tuesday, August 16, 2011, at the offices of Connecticut Innovations, 865 Brook Street, Rocky Hill, Connecticut.

**Call to Order:** The meeting was called to order at 1:09 p.m. Members present: Richard H. Dees, Ph.D. (by phone); Gerald Fishbone, M.D.; Myron Genel, M.D.; David Goldhamer, Ph.D.; Ronald Hart, Ph.D. (by phone); Anne Hiskes, Ph.D. (by phone); Ann Kiessling, Ph.D. (by phone); Jewel Mullen, M.D., M.P.H., M.P.A.; Paul Pescatello, J.D., Ph.D; and Milton B. Wallack, D.D.S.

Advisory Committee Members Absent: Treena Livingston Arinzeh, Ph.D.

**Other Attendees:** Marianne Horn (DPH); Chelsey Sarnecky (CI); and Madeline Riccio (Yale).

**Opening Remarks:**

Dr. Mullen thanked the Advisory Committee members for attending the grant review meeting in July and for their flexibility with handling some difficult decisions. She recognized the members’ integrity and scholarly excellence during the process. Dr. Mullen indicated that she received a letter of resignation from Mr. Mandelkern who will no longer be able to serve as a member of the Advisory Committee. There was consensus that a letter of proclamation recognizing Mr. Mandelkern’s contributions and efforts should be issued to Mr. Mandelkern. Ms. Sarnecky agreed to assist with obtaining a proclamation from the Governor’s office.

Attorney Horn stated that even though the Advisory Committee is no longer statutorily required, an Annual Report of the Advisory Committee is being prepared and will be sent to the Advisory Committee members for review prior to the September meeting and prior to distribution to the public and posting on the DPH Website.

Attorney Horn indicated that there are currently five vacant positions on the Advisory Committee, and she encouraged existing members to provide names of potential candidates. Attorney Horn will provide a list of the current composition of the members of the Advisory Committee, the appointing authorities for each of the members, and the vacant positions. Any input should be provided to Attorney Horn.

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**Approval of Minutes – 7/19/11 Meeting**

The Advisory Committee members were asked to consider the minutes from the July 19, 2011 grant review meeting.

**MOTION:** Upon a motion made by Dr. Dees, seconded by Dr. Hiskes, the Advisory Committee members voted in favor of adopting the minutes from the July 19, 2011 meeting as presented (Dr. Genel and Dr. Pescatello were not present for the vote).

**Follow up from July 19, 2011 Meeting:**

Dr. Wallack summarized four key issues raised at the July 19, 2011 grant review meeting which are as follows:

- scheduling a half-day meeting in the fall for businesses and industry to encourage them to access the stem cell initiative
  - representatives from the major universities could be invited to attend to review guidelines so that applications are submitted properly
- how to be more definitive in the Request for Proposals (“RFP”) about the Advisory Committee’s intent with respect to core grants
- whether or not it is appropriate for Established Investigators who are already doing stem cell research to be a principal investigator on a seed grant
- how can the Advisory Committee be sure that research identified in certain grant applications will be performed in Connecticut

Dr. Wallack stated that additionally, he would like the Advisory Committee members to consider whether specific amounts should be added back in the RFP for each of the various categories.

The Advisory Committee members discussed the suggestion to have a half-day or full-day workshop to provide information about the program. It was noted that in addition to providing information to those not as well informed about the program, guidance could be provided on the application process to obtain more successful applications. Due to the limited resources available to sponsor such an event, a suggestion was made to couple the event with state efforts to advance biotechnology and economic development in Connecticut. There was a lengthy discussion about who to invite to such a workshop. The following suggestions were made: small start-up companies and businesses, universities, CI representatives, hospitals, representatives from CI’s portfolio companies, and companies from surrounding states. Some concern was expressed with private companies not being able to obtain embryonic stem cell research oversight (“ESCRO”) approval. It was noted that ESCRO issues may be

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overcome through a private group in California. A suggestion was made to put together a preliminary peer review group to help determine whether private projects being proposed could receive venture capital support.

The group discussed the importance of basic research, increasing the number of educated stem cell researchers in Connecticut and getting information out to smaller universities and others who may not be as informed about the program.

There was general consensus that the 2012 RFP should be released prior to conducting the workshop. Dr. Wallack agreed to chair a subcommittee to organize the workshop, and Dr. Fishbone and Dr. Pescatello agreed to serve as members of the subcommittee. Ms. Sarnecky agreed to help find additional members to serve on the subcommittee.

**MOTION:** Upon a motion made by Dr. Wallack, seconded by Dr. Goldhamer, the Advisory Committee members voted unanimously in favor of moving forward to schedule and conduct a half-day workshop in the fall with a list of invitees as inclusive as possible to discuss the Stem Cell Research Program.

**Revisions to 2012 RFP:**

Dr. Wallack asked the Advisory Committee members to consider adding back language in the RFP specifying grant amounts for each of the various categories.

A discussion ensued about language in the RFP for core grant awards. Ms. Sarnecky explained how CI initially invests in companies and then provides follow-on investments with other investors until a company can grow and succeed on its own. Noting the importance of the core facilities to the state, Ms. Sarnecky suggested that the Advisory Committee members consider a follow-on funding mechanism for the cores facilities that would require matching funds by the grant recipients. Dr. Kiessling noted that matching funding has worked successfully with the California programs. Dr. Goldhamer explained that it is easier for a researcher to request matching funds from a university up front rather than having a grant significantly reduced and having to request gap funding from the university later.

Dr. Mullen noted that there were discussions in July about how to handle the recurrent requests for funding of core facilities and to have more specific language in the 2012 RFP about the intent of the funding. A discussion ensued on the specific language in the 2011 RFP about the funding of core facilities. The following language is extracted from the 2011 RFP: "Core funding is not a priority for this round of funding. Some additional core funding may be considered for applications with novel or unusual scientific merit. Applications will be considered for additional support for expansion or enhancement of already established cores that will be made widely accessible to the Connecticut stem cell research community, and that are likely to advance stem cell

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research throughout the State. Proposals must include an explanation of the need for a new core or expansion of an existing core, along with estimates of likely capacity and usage. Previously funded cores should provide specific details in their budget justification about the necessity of additional funding; including explanation of how new and existing funding will be integrated without overlap. . .” Because of the importance of the core facilities in Connecticut, concern was expressed that taking out the language about funding for core facilities may be too absolute.

The Advisory Committee members discussed how to proceed with funding for core facilities. A suggestion was made to establish a certain amount of funding, much less than in the past, for core facilities while emphasizing to the cores the need to become self-sufficient and funded. There was general consensus that it is important for the core facilities to become self-sufficient and that matching funding could be considered to help maximize stem cell funding. In response to a question, it was noted that Yale University has received millions of dollars of federal and other funding because of the core facility. The Advisory Committee members discussed possible funding amounts for core facilities. The suggested amounts ranged from \$400,000 to an unlimited amount to encourage the maximum matching of funds. A suggestion was made to reduce the Advisory Committee funds for core facilities each year over a period of several years.

The Advisory Committee members discussed broadening the language in the 2012 RFP to indicate an intent to continue funding core facilities (not limiting funding to “novel or unusual scientific merit”), and to include a maximum amount of funding to each qualified core recipient in the last year of the original grant funding to avoid interruption of funding, contingent upon the grant recipient obtaining matching of \$1 to \$1 funding from other sources. A suggestion was made to invite representatives from the two core facilities to the September Advisory Committee meeting to obtain input and answer questions before finalizing the language in the RFP about funding for core facilities. Ms. Sarnecky will relay information to the representatives from the universities and invite them to the next Advisory Committee meeting.

The Advisory Committee members discussed the timing of the 2012 RFP. There was consensus to try to finalize the RFP in September and release it in early to mid October.

**Budget Revision Approval for New 2011 Grants:**

Ms. Sarnecky reviewed the proposed budget revisions that were submitted in response to the reduction of the funding amounts for some of the 2011 grants. She stated that CI looked at the proposed revised budgets, and it appears that the appropriate percentage reductions was taken in all categories; and no significant changes were made to the scope of the projects. Ms. Sarnecky asked the Advisory Committee members to review the revised budget for grant 11SCC01, Dr. Dealy, principal investigator, because the grant is from a company with a subcontract to UCONN and is different than the typical

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proposals submitted by the universities. The two Advisory Committee members that reviewed grant proposal 11SCC01 summarized the revised budget.

**MOTION:** Upon a motion made by Dr. Fishbone, seconded by Dr. Wallack, the eligible Advisory Committee members voted unanimously in favor of accepting the revised budgets for the following 2011 grant proposals:

- 11SCC01, Dr. Dealy, principal investigator, \$1,290,499 grant
- 11SCB18, Dr. Qyang, principal investigator, \$375,000 grant for 2 years
- 11SCB24, Dr. Li, principal investigator, \$337,470 grant for 2 years
- 11SCD02, Dr. Lin, principal investigator, \$500,000 grant for 1 year
- 11SCDIS02, Dr. Boelsterli, principal investigator, \$1,290,499 grant

**10SCA47, Dr. Drazinic, Amendment to Scope of Project:**

Ms. Sarnecky summarized the proposed changes to the scope of the project for grant 10SCA47, Dr. Drazinic, principal investigator. A discussion ensued on some of the issues the principal investigator had with getting Institutional Review Board approval. Ms. Sarnecky indicated that the principal investigator is also seeking approval to extend the due date for the annual report until the end of the year. Questions arose about the change in the scope of the project. A suggestion was made to invite the principal investigator in to answer questions and defer action on the request at this time. The Advisory Committee members asked for a financial update/progress report of the funds and project for this grant recipient.

**MOTION:** Upon a motion made by Dr. Wallack, seconded by Dr. Fishbone, the eligible Advisory Committee members voted in favor of requesting that the principal investigator for grant 10SCA47 come to the September Advisory Committee meeting to discuss the request to change the scope of the project and to discuss the budget and expenses to date for the project.

**10SCB12, Dr. Lai, Transfer to Storrs:**

Ms. Sarnecky discussed the request to transfer project 10SCB12, Dr. Lai, principal investigator, from UCHC to UCONN Storrs. She noted that Dr. Lai indicated that the transfer would not affect the objectives or scope of the project.

**MOTION:** Upon a motion made by Dr. Pescatello, seconded by Dr. Fishbone, the eligible Advisory Committee members voted in favor of authorizing the transfer of grant 10SCB12, Dr. Lai, principal investigator, to UCONN, Storrs.

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**10SCA06, Dr. Aneskievich, Personnel Change:**

Ms. Sarnecky explained the request to change the personnel for grant 10SCA06, Dr. Aneskievich, principal investigator.

**MOTION:** Upon a motion made by Dr. Wallack, seconded by Dr. Pescatello, the eligible Advisory Committee members voted in favor of authorizing the requested change in personnel for grant 10SCA06, Dr. Aneskievich, principal investigator.

**08SCBUCHC016, Dr. Morest, Carryover Request:**

Ms. Sarnecky explained the request to carryover funding for grant 08SCBUCHC016, Dr. Morest, principal investigator.

**MOTION:** Upon a motion made by Dr. Genel, seconded by Dr. Pescatello, the eligible Advisory Committee members voted in favor of authorizing the requested carryover of funding for grant 08SCBUCHC016, Dr. Morest, principal investigator.

**08SCBUCHC12, Dr. Mayer, Carryover Request:**

The Advisory Committee members discussed the request to carryover funding for grant 08SCBUCHC12, Dr. Mayer, principal investigator. Questions arose about the large amount being carried over.

**MOTION:** Upon a motion made by Dr. Fishbone, seconded by Dr. Pescatello, the eligible Advisory Committee members voted in favor of authorizing the requested carryover of funding for grant 08SCBUCHC12, Dr. Mayer, principal investigator, contingent upon the receipt of a satisfactory explanation of the carryover amount.

**08SCCYSME005, Dr. Redmond, Request for Rebudget for Recruitment Costs:**

This item was not discussed.

**08SCDYALE004, Dr. Lin, Request for No-Cost Extension:**

Ms. Sarnecky explained the request for a no-cost extension for grant 08SCDYALE004, Dr. Lin, for seven months to March 31, 2012 and to carry over the remaining \$222,107 of funds until March 31, 2012.

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**MOTION:** Upon a motion made by Dr. Fishbone, seconded by Dr. Pescatello, the eligible Advisory Committee members voted in favor of authorizing the carryover of funding and no-cost extension for grant 08SCDYALE004, Dr. Lin, principal investigator.

**08SCDYALE35, Dr. Herold, Request for No-Cost Extension:**

The Advisory Committee members discussed the request for a no-cost extension for grant 08SCDYALE35 to May 31, 2012 and to carry the remaining \$13,991.95 of funds until May 31, 2012.

**MOTION:** Upon a motion made by Dr. Pescatello, seconded by Dr. Fishbone, the eligible Advisory Committee members voted in favor of authorizing the carryover of funding and no-cost extension for grant 08SCDYALE35, Dr. Herold, principal investigator.

There was a general discussion about funding not being utilized as budgeted. Dr. Goldhamer explained that it is very difficult to predict how much will be spent each year when grant applications are submitted. He noted that the National Institutes of Health allows a carryover of 25 percent, and anything over 25 percent requires additional justification and approval. Dr. Goldhamer stated that often, researchers will be more conservative at the beginning of a project to ensure sufficient funding at the end of a project.

**Public Comments:**

There were no public comments.

**Adjournment**

**MOTION:** Upon a motion made by Dr. Wallack, seconded by Dr. Genel, the Advisory Committee members voted unanimously in favor of adjourning the meeting at 3:52 p.m.

Respectfully submitted:

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Dr. Robert Galvin, Chair