We in Connecticut have become leaders in stem cell research ever since legislation was passed in 2005 which authorized this work with a proposed 100 million dollar commitment over 10 years. In November of 2006, we became the first state in the nation to award stem cell research grants with a distribution of 20 million dollars in support of approximately 26 projects. As of today, we have supported over 100 projects and approximately 250 scientists. Our program remains strong because we continue to be totally transparent and highly open and inclusive.

It has always been the intent of the Connecticut Stem Cell Research Advisory Committee to consider funding any form of stem cell research with priority given to human embryonic stem cell research. Our aim has been to find projects of the greatest excellence and which have potential relevance to human health. We have, in fact, now begun stressing a special category of disease-directed collaborative work. This category needs to have the potential of beginning Federal Food and Drug Administration review within four years of awarding of the grant. We also continue to emphasize the funding of seed grants as well as established investigator awards, group projects and, to a certain extent, core grants.

Our state stem cell initiative is widely recognized for its preeminent position in stem cell research. We have originated four stem cell lines, which have been accepted by the NIH Federal Registry. In addition, our research efforts are responsible for the publication of over 50 scientific papers and has helped to attract approximately 45 million dollars of federal funding. The stem cell program has also played an important role in attracting Jackson Laboratory to our state. The partnership between Jackson, the University of Connecticut and Yale University has the potential for making important breakthroughs in personalized medicine. It will also give significant impetus to the establishment of a robust and vibrant life science industry.

This will all help us to move closer to the merging of research and commercialization. These activities will have the potential to, hopefully, produce discoveries which will enable us to better treat human diseases, injuries and afflictions such as diabetes, Parkinson's disease, Alzheimers, ALS (Lou Gehrig's disease), multiple sclerosis, autism, macular degeneration, spinal cord injuries and many other devastating problems. In addition, we will be able to gain greater insights into the development of cancers, heart disease and other medical problems, while also performing more advanced drug testing. This will allow for potentially greater business development, as is already occurring at UConn and at Yale, while transforming how medicine is practiced in the 21st century. It is, therefore, our hope that an increasing number of scientists and institutions will be attracted to this highly significant research, which has the potential of creating hope for so many afflicted individuals.

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