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California's Stem Cell Institute Dedicates \$5 Million to Fight COVID-19

Investment Demonstrates Remarkable Potential of Regenerative Medicine and Vital Need to Renew Funding for Stem Cell Research in California

LOS ANGELES, CA — The California Institute for Regenerative Medicine (CIRM) today voted to redirect \$5 million to support projects dedicated to combatting the spread of the novel coronavirus pandemic (COVID-19). Nearly two decades ago, California made a critical investment in stem cell research that propelled this state to the forefront of regenerative medical discovery and set the stage for the opportunity this new funding holds – mitigating the disease and the risk of the loss of life from the Coronavirus currently impacting the lives of not only every Californian, but the lives of every human across the globe.

To be eligible for CIRM's dedicated funding to fight COVID-19, grant applicants must be ready to initiate work within 30 days of approval and must propose plans to achieve clear deliverables that demonstrate progress within six months.

“The investment by California's stem cell institute to combat COVID-19 highlights the remarkable potential of this research and therapy development to impact the lives of every Californian. Renewing funding for stem cell research and therapy development has already been proven to lead to medical discoveries that improve or save the lives of California's children and families.” said **Robert Klein II, Chairman of Californians for Stem Cell Research, Treatments and Cures**. “In a time with so much uncertainty and fear in the unknown, medical science has the power to give us realistic hope and a real path forward to restoring health for numerous areas of chronic disease and injury. We urge Californians to think back on this moment, when they decide the fate of future life-saving stem cell discoveries and treatments come November.”

In 2004, voters overwhelmingly approved Proposition 71, establishing CIRM and authorizing a \$3 billion investment in stem cell research to advance therapies and treatments for diseases and injuries including cancer, heart disease, Alzheimer's, Parkinson's, diabetes and now, COVID-19. But this vital research and therapy development will soon end, unless California voters pass the California Stem Cell Research, Treatments and Cures Initiative of 2020, when they go to the ballot in November. A yes vote in November will renew this vital funding and forge a path to future discoveries and cures.

If passed, the California Stem Cell Research, Treatments and Cures Initiative of 2020 would authorize \$5.5 billion in state general obligation bonds to continue funding stem cell research and the development and delivery of treatments and cures, as well as expand access to and affordability of therapies. During the first five years after approval, the State of California would not be required to make any payment from the general fund for these bonds.

CIRM-funded discoveries have already saved and improved lives, and hold the potential to help millions more who are living with diseases and conditions beyond COVID-19, including spinal cord injuries, leukemia, blindness, heart disease, HIV/AIDS, multiple sclerosis, kidney disease and more:

- A high school student who was paralyzed, regained function in his upper body and went on to college. More than 95% of patients in this trial showed motor improvements.
- A mother who went blind from a genetic disease continues to experience improved peripheral vision.
- Two FDA-approved treatments have been developed for fatal blood cancers.
- More than 50 babies who were born without functioning immune systems have been cured of the once-fatal “bubble baby” disease.
- To correct a fatal fetal condition, researchers safely transplanted a mother’s stem cells into her growing fetus during pregnancy, leading to the birth of normal infant.

To learn more about the life-changing research funded by CIRM visit caforcures.com. This press release is produced by the Campaign Committee of the California Stem Cell Research, Treatment, and Cures Initiative; it is not a statement from any California agency, department or representative.

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