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Stem Cell Research, Treatments & Cures Initiative Qualifies for November 2020 Statewide Ballot

*California Voters Have Opportunity to Advance Treatments and Cures that Could Save and Improve Lives,
While Helping Create Jobs and Stimulate State Economy*

PALO ALTO, CA — Californians for Stem Cell Research, Treatments & Cures announced today that the California Stem Cell Research, Treatments and Cures Initiative of 2020 has qualified for the November 2020 statewide ballot.

Voters will now have the opportunity to renew funding for the continued advancement of treatments and cures that could save or improve the lives of millions living with chronic diseases and conditions, like cancer, Diabetes, heart disease, Alzheimer's, stroke and even COVID-19. The Initiative would authorize \$5.5 billion in state general obligation bonds to fund the development of vital treatments and cures, and it will also help stimulate the state's economy in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic.

In 2004, voters overwhelmingly approved Proposition 71 with nearly 60% of the vote. Proposition 71 established the California Institute for Regenerative Medicine (CIRM) to fund research and therapy development throughout the state to advance lifesaving and life-changing medical research and treatments for chronic diseases and conditions that touch nearly all Californian families. CIRM's program has already saved and improved lives through the advancement of more than 80 clinical trials, two FDA-approved cancer treatments, new treatments that are already being fast-tracked for FDA approval and over 2,900 published medical discoveries.

Nearly 925,000 voter signatures were collected and submitted on time to place the Initiative on the ballot – despite the restrictions by California's shelter in place orders.

“Our coalition of over 60 dedicated patient advocate organizations fought to ensure our stem cell research Initiative qualified for the November ballot, and we're eternally grateful for their commitment and vision,” said **Bob Klein, Chairman of Californians for Stem Cell Research, Treatments and Cures**. “During the past decade, California has made incredibly thoughtful investments and significant progress along our journey to developing therapies and cures, for diseases and conditions like diabetes, age-related blindness, cancer, Epilepsy, Parkinson's, Alzheimer's, and heart disease; and, it is critical to California families that this vital therapy development pipeline continue to be funded. Our state has always been a leader in medical and scientific research and therapy development, ranking second in the world when evaluated as a nation. Continuing to fund that mission is essential to the health of our families while stimulating the economic recovery for California, with good paying jobs, created by this program.”

The initial funding for CIRM from Proposition 71 has now been fully committed. If Californians do not pass the 2020 stem cell Initiative, this vital research will come to a halt. Medical discoveries that are currently

in the transitional pipeline will not be able to progress to clinical trials, delaying potential lifesaving and life-changing treatments for years, or even decades.

“Since I was diagnosed with a rare form of blood cancer in 2006, there has been a tremendous amount of advancement in research and discovery that has allowed me to be here today, sharing my story, in large part due to the California Institute for Regenerative Medicine supporting the science that saved my life,” said **Sandra Dillion, a clinical trial participant and cancer patient advocate**. “Without California’s investment in advancing stem cell research and cures, I would not have the same energized, healthy life that I have been able to once again experience.”

By continuing this program, California has the opportunity to help millions who are living with chronic diseases and conditions including cancer, Alzheimer’s, heart disease, diabetes, Parkinson’s, spinal cord injuries, blindness, HIV/AIDS, multiple sclerosis, kidney disease and many more. The Initiative has strong support from more than 60 patient advocacy organizations, Nobel Prize winners, and respected medical professionals and scientists as members of the [coalition supporting its passage](#).

“The devastating impacts of various cancers are felt by everyone in our society – accounting for nearly 25% of deaths in California and is the second-leading cause of death in the state,” said **Dr. Antoni Ribas, President of the American Association for Cancer Research**. “We must seize any opportunity to support advancements in medicine that could potentially save the lives of millions of Californians battling cancer and other diseases, and we have that opportunity before us with this patient centric Initiative.”

Under strict accountability and transparency standards, the Initiative will also provide greater access to clinical trials and treatments for Californians that live in areas of the state that generally lack access to these new cutting-edge therapies. Additionally, it makes resources available for patients, families and caregivers who need financial assistance for medical, travel, lodging and living assistance, to reach clinical trial sites.

The Initiative also requires that at least \$1.5 billion in funds be dedicated to the development and delivery of treatments focused on diseases and conditions, such as Alzheimer’s, Parkinson’s, stroke, epilepsy, brain cancer and mental health conditions such as Schizophrenia, autism and post-traumatic stress.

“I’ve had the great privilege of leading numerous clinical trials to advance new treatments to help those suffering from previously untreatable chronic diseases, from SCID, or ‘bubble baby’ disease, to Sickle Cell Disease,” said **Dr. Donald Kohn, Pediatrician, Distinguished Professor and Scientist at the UCLA Broad Stem Cell Research Center**. “This work, the advancements we have made, and the lives we have saved, would not have been possible without California’s 2004 investment in stem cell research, and we must continue this work through this year’s Initiative because we have new stem cell therapies for other diseases in the pipeline to bring to patients.”

The 2020 stem cell Initiative also provides a stimulus package that Californians needs now more than ever – it is exactly the kind of long-term investment we should make now to rebuild our economy. To date, CIRM’s program has generated \$10.7 billion in increased economic activity in California by creating tens of thousands of jobs, increasing state tax revenues, increasing economic output and attracting outside world class talent, business, and investments.

The Initiative is fiscally responsible and was designed in a manner that creates a powerful, job-creating economic stimulus; a particularly significant benefit for the people of California following the COVID-19

crisis. Notably the Initiative does not impose a tax on residents – it is a general obligation bond that will be repaid from the state’s existing budget beginning a full five years after the Initiative’s passage, starting in 2026. Moreover, it will increase the amount of state funds available to tackle other issues for the next 10 years by generating an increase state tax revenue through 2030 – an increase that is greater than the cost of bond payments during that time. And lastly, the bond repayments can be spread over a 40-year period, to distribute the cost of research and development across future generations who will benefit from it.

Chronic disease is the leading cause of death, the leading driver of annual health care spending and the leading cause of family and individual bankruptcies nationwide. This Initiative is a small price to pay, to save lives and to save Californians billions of dollars in health care costs while reducing suffering from chronic disease over the coming decades.

“Investing in the future health of our families and loved ones is one of the most important investments we can make today – chronic disease is the leading driver of the nation’s annual health care spending, costing Americans an estimated \$3.15 trillion annually and causing preventable death and disability,” said **Kenneth Thorpe, Chairman of the Partnership to Fight Chronic Disease.** “The 2020 Stem Cell Initiative will help in the fight against chronic disease.”

Now that the Initiative is eligible to qualify, the Secretary of State’s office will certify the Initiative, along with other eligible Initiatives, for the November 2020 ballot on June 25, 2020. To learn more about the California Stem Cell Research, Treatments and Cures Initiative of 2020, please visit www.caforcures.com.

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