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Updated: October 15, 2020

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## Stem cell initiative: Save lives and energize the economy

By: Bob Klein

July 9, 2020

Capitol Weekly: <https://capitolweekly.net/stem-cell-initiative-save-lives-and-energize-the-economy/>

In our new financial reality, our state and you as voters are faced with tough decisions. Come November, you will decide the fate of California's stem cell institute. This decision has never been more important to the future of California's health care, for the patients and their families, than it is now.

Californians overwhelmingly approved the state's first stem cell initiative in 2004, with nearly 60% of the vote, and widespread support from patient advocacy organizations, labor, business and elected officials. The 2004 initiative established the California Institute for Regenerative Medicine (CIRM) to fund medical research and the development of new treatments and cures.

**|** *If Californians do not pass Proposition 14, vital lifesaving research will come to a halt.*

CIRM funding has advanced research and therapy development for more than 75 different diseases and conditions, more than 90 clinical trials, more than 1,000 medical projects at 70 institutions across California and nearly 3,000 published medical discoveries. This investment has already saved and improved lives, including a high school student who was paralyzed in a diving accident and was able to regain function in his upper body and go on to college, a mother who went blind from a genetic disease has had some of her eyesight restored, two FDA-approved cancer treatments are already saving lives, and many more.

As funding for California's stem cell research program has now run out, Californians have a critical opportunity to pass the 2020 stem cell initiative — Proposition 14 — to continue to advance lifesaving research and treatment development. Proposition 14 just recently qualified for the November ballot with early support from more than 65 patient advocacy organizations, the University of California and Nobel Prize winners.

If Californians do not pass Proposition 14, vital lifesaving research will come to a halt. Medical discoveries won't be able to progress to clinical trials, delaying lifesaving and life-changing treatments for cancer, diabetes, heart disease, Alzheimer's, Parkinson's, infectious diseases like COVID-19 and more for years or decades.

Additionally, not passing Proposition 14 would eliminate a critical economic and jobs stimulus for our state.

Arguably, our state leaders are rightfully concerned about the state budget amid the current landscape. But as we enter a period of economic crisis, this bond measure will act as an economic recovery and jobs stimulus.

*It is not a tax; it is a general obligation bond that will be repaid by the state, over decades, beginning in 2026.*

Proposition 14 will increase the amount of state funds available to tackle other issues for the next 10 years by increasing state tax revenues through 2030 — potentially providing more state revenue than the cost of bond payments during that time. To date, California’s stem cell research program has generated \$10.7 billion in increased state economic activity and hundreds of millions in additional state revenues.

California’s stem cell research program also creates tens of thousands of jobs at every level — from lab technicians and maintenance workers to nurses and physicians.

Proposition 14 is exactly the kind of long-term investment we should make now to rebuild our economy. The initiative was specifically designed to be fiscally responsible. It is not a tax; it is a general obligation bond that will be repaid by the state, over decades, beginning in 2026 — a full five years after its passage.

We can’t afford not to fund Proposition 14.

Chronic diseases are the leading cause of death and the leading driver of annual health care spending and bankruptcies. In California alone, more than 30% of the state’s budget is spent on health care. With this cost rising every year, it is a growing strain on California families and our state budget.

If we hesitate to fund proper research to develop cures for chronic illnesses, our health care costs will financially drain California families, as well as our struggling state budget. Reducing the cost of treating just 6 of 80 major chronic diseases or injuries by 1-2% would pay for the Initiative twice over.

The decision you make in November will have lasting impacts on the state funds available to tackle priorities California needs to address now, and in the future, including housing, education, or the environment. Proposition 14 will generate additional revenue to help address these issues now, and potentially save California tens of billions for the future.

Proposition 14 will cost the state an average of less than \$5 per person, per year – about the cost of a bottle of aspirin. That is a small price to pay to potentially save millions of lives and tens of billions of dollars in health care costs in the coming decades. At the end of the day, Proposition 14 could save your life or the life of someone you love — how can we afford not to make this investment?

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*Editor’s Note: Bob Klein is chairman of Californians for Stem Cell Research, Treatments and Cures.*

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Funding details at [www.fppc.ca.gov](http://www.fppc.ca.gov)

# The San Diego Union-Tribune

## Commentary: How Prop. 14 could help find therapies and cures that might save millions of lives

By: Sandra Dillion

September 15, 2020

San Diego Union Tribune: <https://www.sandiegouniontribune.com/opinion/commentary/story/2020-09-15/yes-on-proposition-14-stem-cell-research>

All of us know a family member, a friend or a loved one dealing with a chronic disease or condition — and in some instances that person may be ourselves. That was the case for me nearly two decades ago when I was diagnosed with a rare form of blood cancer called myelofibrosis.

Upon learning of my cancer diagnosis, I was left feeling helpless, afraid and searching for answers about how this disease would affect my everyday life, what I could do to fight it, and how much time I had left to live.

It is because of California's forward-looking leadership in passing [Proposition 71](#) in 2004 — hoping to find treatments and cures for chronic diseases and illnesses — that has allowed me to still be here today. Proposition 71 established the [California Institute for Regenerative Medicine \(CIRM\)](#) to fund stem-cell research and treatment development. It's this initiative that led to an U.S. Food and Drug Administration-approved cancer treatment that saved my life.

This November, California voters will have an opportunity to pass [Proposition 14](#) to continue the journey to save lives from chronic diseases and other conditions including cancer, heart disease, diabetes, Alzheimer's, COVID-19 and more.

Since the creation of CIRM, California has made great progress on advancing research and treatments for more than 75 chronic diseases and conditions that affect millions of Californians every day. On average, it takes 12-15 years for new discoveries to progress from the lab through clinical trials; even then, a small fraction will gain FDA approval. CIRM has defied those odds. The average CIRM grant is less than 7 years old; yet, CIRM funding has led to more than 90 clinical trials and two FDA-approved lifesaving treatments for previously fatal forms of cancer, with more on the way.

While many clinical trials are still in the early stages, a few examples of the remarkable success stories include cancer patients (like me) who had exhausted all other treatment options. I am now in remission, type 1 diabetics have begun producing insulin, quadriplegics are regaining upper body function and blind patients are regaining their sight.

Many of these trials are on track to result in additional FDA-approved treatments over the next few years, and CIRM's nearly 3,000 published medical discoveries have created the basis for more to come. But, if California voters do not pass Proposition 14, many promising treatments and cures may end here.

For the millions of Californians who live with a chronic disease or condition, this may be their last hope; advancing medical progress to fight devastating and life-threatening diseases and conditions is an urgent matter and should not be put on hold.

In California, cancer is the [second leading cause](#) of death throughout the state. It is estimated that this year alone, more than 170,000 new [cancer cases](#) will be identified, which will ultimately lead to over 60,000 deaths in the state. Furthermore, in San Diego County alone, over [50 percent of the deaths](#) are associated with either cancer, heart disease, type 2 diabetes or lung disease — accounting for billions of dollars spent on these prevalent chronic diseases by individual families, businesses and California taxpayers.

California cannot afford not to fund Proposition 14. Through funding Proposition 14 we can seize the opportunity to continue finding therapies and cures that could potentially save the lives of millions.

Our initial investment has made us a leader in the field of stem-cell research. Our investments in infrastructure, training and equipment alone have turned our state's universities and institutions — including the University of California San Diego, the Scripps Research Institute, the Salk Institute for Biological Studies, the Sanford Burnham Institute and San Diego State University — into epicenters for stem-cell research, creating a reality where stem-cell research has the greatest potential to advance lifesaving and life-changing cures.

The passage of Proposition 71 helped save my life. It is unimaginable to think that Californians would vote to discontinue this amazing effort — I don't know where I would be or what condition I would be in if it wasn't for the investment Californians made nearly two decades ago.

I know firsthand the possible treatments that Proposition 14 could bring to your life or the life of someone you love. So join me and the growing coalition of more than 80 patient advocate organizations, hundreds of leading scientists and physicians, Nobel Prize winners, senior elected officials, the California Democratic Party and University of California in voting yes on Proposition 14.

*Dillon is a San Diego resident and former bone marrow patient now in remission.*

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## Opinion: Prop. 14 provides health, economic benefits for California

By Libby Schaaf and R. Zachary Wasserman

September 20, 2020

The Mercury News/East Bay Times (Bay Area News Group):

<https://www.mercurynews.com/2020/09/20/opinion-prop-14-provides-health-economic-benefits-for-california/>

<https://www.eastbaytimes.com/2020/09/20/opinion-prop-14-provides-health-economic-benefits-for>

Too many lives have been lost, too many Californians are out of work, and our state budget is beyond strained. The toll of COVID-19 is emblematic of the cost and devastation associated with chronic disease — as it is the leading cause of death and leading driver of health care spending and bankruptcies in California.

This November, Californians will have an opportunity to vote on Proposition 14, which will advance stem cell research to help reduce the impacts of chronic diseases and conditions including cancer, heart disease, diabetes, Alzheimer's, COVID-19 and more.

Proposition 14 will continue what Californians started in 2004 when we passed Proposition 71, creating the California Institute for Regenerative Medicine (CIRM), a statewide stem cell research and therapy funding institute located here in Oakland.

Since then, California has made great progress on advancing research and treatments for more than 75 chronic diseases and conditions that affect millions of Californians every day. On average, it takes 12-15 years for new discoveries to progress from the lab through clinical trials — even then, a small fraction will gain FDA approval. CIRM has defied those odds. The average CIRM grant is less than 7 years old, yet CIRM funding has led to more than 90 clinical trials and 2 FDA-approved lifesaving treatments for previously fatal forms of cancer.

While still in early stages, examples of other remarkable clinical trial results include cancer patients who had exhausted all other therapies but are now in remission, Type 1 diabetics have begun producing insulin, quadriplegics are regaining upper body function, and blind patients are regaining their sight.

Many of these trials are on track to result in additional FDA-approved treatments over the next few years, and CIRM's nearly 3,000 published medical discoveries have created the basis for more to come. But, if California voters do not pass Proposition 14, many treatments and cures may end here — and we will miss an opportunity to gain early intervention therapies and stimulate our state's struggling economy.

# The Mercury News EAST BAY TIMES

The rate of chronic disease increases annually, as does the cost of health care, which consumes nearly 30% of our state budget — 15 years ago, it only accounted for 15%. If this trend continues, in 15 years from now, California will not be able to afford investments in environmental protection, education or affordable housing. The financial burden chronic diseases and conditions place on our families, small businesses and individual incomes is growing at the same devastating rate.

By reducing the cost through early-intervention therapies for just six of eight major chronic diseases or injuries by 1-2%, we can save our families and state economy billions and pay for this initiative twice over.

Proposition 14 also will provide an economic and jobs stimulus when California needs it most. Based on recent studies demonstrating the economic benefits of CIRM, Proposition 14 would generate an estimated \$20 billion in increased economic activity in California, \$1.2 billion in additional state and local tax revenues, and more than 100,000 jobs at every level. Proposition 14 will not cost the state anything until 2026 and will provide economic benefits that outweigh the cost of the bonds until 2030.

Proposition 14 is supported by a growing coalition of more than 80 patient advocate organizations, hundreds of leading scientists and physicians, Nobel Prize winners, senior elected officials, the California Democratic Party and University of California.

Amid a global pandemic, we are constantly reminded that chronic disease is devastating and expensive, and we cannot take the health of our loved ones for granted. Proposition 14 is an opportunity that Californians cannot afford to pass up.

*Libby Schaaf is mayor of Oakland. R. Zachary Wasserman is chair of the Oakland Chamber of Commerce.*

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Funding details at [www.fppc.ca.gov](http://www.fppc.ca.gov)

# The Bakersfield Californian

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## **OTHER VOICES: Proposition 14 provides hope for diabetes patients**

**By: Dr. Adriana Padilla and Thom Scher**

**Oct 11, 2020**

**The Bakersfield Californian:** [https://www.bakersfield.com/opinion/other-voices-proposition-14-provides-hope-for-diabetes-patients/article\\_ef62bfca-0824-11eb-98a5-27fe532a4889.html](https://www.bakersfield.com/opinion/other-voices-proposition-14-provides-hope-for-diabetes-patients/article_ef62bfca-0824-11eb-98a5-27fe532a4889.html)

Diabetes is a constant 24/7 job. More than 3 million Californians can relate to the never-ending demands of diabetes care that impact their physical, emotional, professional and financial health. With a diabetes diagnosis, patients also face the fears and reality of serious complications that include heart disease, stroke, blindness and other serious issues, making it the third leading cause of death in the state.

While there's currently no cure for diabetes, some of the most promising treatments are being developed right here in California. Thanks to funding from the California Institute for Regenerative Medicine (CIRM), some patients living with Type I Diabetes are now showing the ability to produce their own insulin again. While this therapy is still in early-stage clinical trials, it has the potential to significantly reduce the burden of diabetes care and risks of diabetes-related health complications for millions of Californians.

CIRM was created by California voters in 2004, when we passed Proposition 71 to fund stem cell research and treatment development at universities and institutes throughout California, making the state a global leader in stem cell research. This November, voters will have an opportunity to continue this charge by voting yes on Proposition 14, which will continue to advance stem cell research and the development of treatments and cures for more than 80 chronic diseases and conditions like cancer, heart disease, diabetes, Alzheimer's and even dangerous infectious diseases like COVID-19.

Since the creation of CIRM, California has achieved more progress in advancing research and treatments than medical and scientific experts thought possible when we began this journey. On average, it takes 12 to 15 years for new discoveries to progress from the lab through clinical trials – even then, a small fraction will gain FDA approval. CIRM has defied those odds. The average CIRM grant is less than 7 years old, yet CIRM funding has led to more than 90 clinical trials, two FDA-approved cancer treatments and nine new treatments that have earned FDA fast-track status.

While the majority of the 90-plus clinical trials are still underway, many lives have already been saved or improved. Cancer patients who had exhausted all other treatment options are now in remission; quadriplegics are regaining upper body function; blind patients are regaining their sight; and organs and tissues that have been lost or damaged are being regenerated.

Several of these clinical trials are expected to result in FDA-approved treatments and therapies in the next two to three years, and with CIRM's nearly 3,000 published medical discoveries in the pipeline, we have the potential to provide more new treatments and cures for chronic diseases that touch the families of nearly all Californians. But, if California voters do not pass Proposition 14, our journey ends here.



# The Bakersfield Californian

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Chronic disease is not just the leading cause of death, it is also the leading driver of health care spending and bankruptcies. It currently costs the state nearly \$40 million every year to treat diabetes, while also costing patients and their families almost two-and-a-half times higher medical expenses than those who do not have the disease. That heavy cost burden will only continue to grow when you consider that nearly half of California's adult population – 11 million Californians – are prediabetic or undiagnosed diabetics.

This heavy and ever-increasing financial burden associated with diabetes is emblematic of the growing strain chronic disease is placing on our state budget, California families and individual incomes. By creating new therapies to reduce the impacts of diabetes by 10 percent, CIRM funding could save Californians nearly eight times the cost of Proposition 14 – now just imagine the health care savings that could be achieved by the 90-plus clinical trials underway that are advancing treatments and cures for dozens of chronic diseases and conditions.

In the current economic climate, Proposition 14 will also provide an economic and jobs stimulus that Californians need now – it will generate an estimated \$1.2 billion in additional tax revenues, and more than 100,000 jobs at no cost to the state until 2026.

I hope you join us and the growing coalition of more than 90 patient advocate organizations, hundreds of leading scientists and physicians, Nobel Prize winners, senior elected officials and the University of California by voting YES on Proposition 14 this November.

*Thom Scher is the president and CEO of Beyond Type 1. Dr. Adriana Padilla is a Bakersfield physician and CIRM board member.*

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# La Opinión

## La proposición 14 crea nuevas oportunidades

**Por: Ysabel Duron/Fundadora y directora ejecutiva de The Latino Cancer Institute.**

**Miembro de la Junta de California Institute for Regenerative Medicine**

**15 de Octubre 2020**

<https://laopinion.com/2020/10/15/la-proposicion-14-crea-nuevas-oportunidades/>

Soy una sobreviviente de cáncer. Creo en la ciencia. Ella me dio el tratamiento que curó mi linfoma de Hodgkin. Pero, yo tuve suerte. Me diagnosticaron a tiempo, tuve un oncólogo de primera, el tratamiento más moderno, un seguro médico excelente y sabía hablar el idioma.

Hoy, el cáncer es la causa principal de muerte entre los latinos, que tienen dificultades tanto con el inglés como con el costo devastador de la enfermedad.

El Latino Cancer Institute ayuda a las familias preocupadas por sus seres queridos y la incertidumbre de cómo encontrar y pagar por la atención necesaria. Pero para mantener la esperanza nos refugiamos en la ciencia.

Seguimos aprendiendo a través de la investigación de mejores tratamientos que ojalá reduzcan el riesgo y la muerte. Necesitamos más investigaciones, no menos. En estos tiempos difíciles de la COVID-19, estamos comprendiendo que la ciencia importa, y que también necesitamos más esperanza.

La investigación con células madre les da esperanza a quienes corren un mayor riesgo y tienen menos opciones para superar las enfermedades. Esperanza fue lo único que tenían los padres de la recién nacida Evie Padilla Vaccaro cuando nació sin un sistema inmunitario y dudosamente alcanzaría los dos años. Un trasplante de células madre le salvó la vida.

Ahora, la investigación con células madre, con todo lo que promete, está en la boleta electoral de California. Este mes de noviembre, la proposición 14 es un voto a favor de la esperanza y representa una oportunidad para que los millones que padecen de cáncer, diabetes, enfermedades cardíacas, VIH, enfermedades de células falciformes y más, tengan una vida mejor.

Incluso ahora, el California Institute for Regenerative Medicine (CIRM), que se fundó para gestionar y aprobar la financiación de investigaciones de células madre, lleva 5 millones de dólares invertidos en encontrar tratamientos y vacunas seguras contra la COVID-19. Y el CIRM se ha comprometido a garantizar que la investigación incluya a las minorías raciales y étnicas, como los latinos, la comunidad más afectada por la pandemia de la COVID en California.

Entiendo que algunos se han sentido usados y explotados por la investigación científica. Y es por eso que existe The Latino Cancer Institute. Para comprometerse, pero también para proteger. Para plantear temas cruciales y oponerse a las ideas perjudiciales. Para exigir inclusión y oportunidades. Por eso apoyo la proposición 14 y le pido a los latinos que hagan

lo mismo. Necesitamos mejores cuidados, tratamientos prometedores y esperanza, ¡hoy más que nunca! Puede que hoy no sea la cura para su enfermedad, pero sí podría serla para un familiar, un amigo, o alguien de la comunidad latina en un futuro próximo. Voten a favor de la proposición 14!

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