

## Mass. governor pushes \$1B stem-cell bill

By Ken Maguire, Associated Press Writer | May 8, 2007

BOSTON --Gov. Deval Patrick proposed Tuesday that Massachusetts invest \$1 billion investment in the biotechnology industry and challenge California as a hub for stem-cell research.

Patrick's 10-year plan was revealed in a speech at a biotechnology convention in Boston. Money would be spent on research grants to scientists and improving public college facilities, Patrick said.

"We want Massachusetts to provide the global platform for bringing your innovations from the drawing board to the market, from inspiration to commercialization, from ideas to cures," Patrick told scientists and company officials.

The initiative calls for the creation of a stem-cell bank, a centralized repository of stem-cell lines for public and private research, overseen by the University of Massachusetts.

Patrick said the bank would be the world's largest catalog of stem-cell lines, with UMass, Harvard University, the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and hospitals including Massachusetts General Hospital contributing their lines.

The research aims to use stem cells, which are created in the first days after conception and can give rise to all the organs and tissues in the body, to replace diseased tissue in hopes of treating a variety of diseases.

Many social conservatives, including President Bush, oppose the work because embryos are destroyed in the process.

Patrick said his timeline would have the bulk of the investment begin in July 2008.

The proposal requires legislative approval. House Speaker Salvatore DiMasi and Senate President Therese Murray attended Patrick's announcement and spoke in favor of the plan.

"We're here to help," DiMasi told the convention crowd. "It is our future. It is for the benefit of mankind and society."

California voters in 2004 approved the nation's most ambitious stem-cell effort, a \$3 billion bond to fund research over 10 years.

Aaron McLearn, a spokesman for California Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger, said Schwarzenegger "welcomes the additional investment in this critical science.

"As the Governor always says, he loves competition because it raises your level of performance. The more research, the better," he said.

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Associated Press writer Glen Johnson contributed to this report.

