



Tuesday, July 7, 2009

## Stem cell studies to rise

**Under new guidelines, Mich. scientists expect to expand research with more federal funding**

*Kim Kozlowski / The Detroit News*

Embryonic stem cell research will dramatically increase in Michigan following Monday's release of new federal guidelines governing how the research is conducted, scientists said.

The guidelines, issued by the National Institutes of Health, set standards for Michigan as it begins a new era of research following voter approval of a constitutional amendment in November. Eventually, the state is expected to receive more federal funding for one of the most hopeful areas in medical research.

Aimed at shaping responsible and ethical stem cell research, the guidelines limit research to embryos that were created for reproductive purposes but were no longer needed and were given with the written consent of donors who were not compensated.

They closely mirror the core restrictions outlined in the amendment, dubbed Proposal 2, said Sean Morrison, director of the University of Michigan Center for Stem Cell Biology.

"The NIH has done an excellent job of creating a good policy based on where the science stands today," he said.

Research opponents disagreed. "The NIH guidelines illustrate the lack of transparency that exists in Michigan following the passage of Proposal 2," said Dave Maluchnik, spokesman for the Michigan Catholic Conference. "The public, including the state Legislature, has no way of knowing how many human embryos are being stored or destroyed in the state."

The National Institutes of Health created the guidelines following the directive of President Barack Obama, who lifted stem cell restrictions set by the Bush administration.

Scientists wanting NIH funding to study embryonic stem cell lines created before the new guidelines, and those obtained outside the United States, will have to demonstrate that the stem cell lines were created under the same ethics policy outlined in the new guidelines.

The guidelines will govern future federal funding of the embryonic stem cell research, which totaled \$88 million in 2008.

Michigan researchers expect millions more federal dollars to come to Michigan, where previous restrictions meant \$1 million went to three Michigan researchers in 2008.

"Michigan has been underrepresented among the research done nationally on embryonic stem cell research because we have been completely handcuffed by the restrictions that existed prior to the passage of Proposal 2," Morrison said.

"Over the next few years, you will see millions more dollars coming to invest in embryonic stem cell research in Michigan."