

February 20, 2007

Romney defends stem cell position

Henry C. Jackson / Associated Press

SIoux CITY, Iowa -- Republican presidential candidate Mitt Romney on Monday defended his opposition to most embryonic stem cell research despite its promise to cure diseases like multiple sclerosis that afflicts his wife, Ann.

In an interview with the Associated Press, the former Massachusetts governor and Michigan native said he was confident that research on adult stem cells and the existing embryonic stem cell lines could eventually provide the medical answers.

Some scientists say embryonic stem cells hold the most promise and the research may eventually lead to treatment and perhaps cures for diseases such as Parkinson's and juvenile diabetes.

In August 2001, Bush restricted government funding to research using only the embryonic stem cell lines then in existence, groups of stem cells kept alive and propagating in lab dishes.

Only about 21 of those lines are available for study, most created in ways that preclude use in humans.

Romney favors work on those lines and said if elected, he would increase funds for research of adult stem cells.