



November 24, 2008

Letter: Stem cell hope in Michigan

by Patricia MacDonell | Michigan Citizens for Stem Cell Research and Cures

Happy day! The recent election delivered a double blessing for those seeking hope and relief from debilitating diseases: Michigan voters passed Proposal 2 and, the incoming presidential administration vowed to sign legislation allowing NIH funding of research using new stem cell lines.

Since 2001, ultra-conservative factions have exerted their influence resulting in the nonsensical practice wherein surplus embryonic stem cells are thrown in the trash rather than used for federally regulated research. Even more stringent, Michigan law made it a crime to create stem cell lines with punishment of up to five years in prison. Again, already created, surplus embryonic cells were thrown in the trash.

The logic of this escapes me and, effective Dec. 19, this will no longer be the law in Michigan. Post-inauguration, U.S. scientists can start catching-up with their international counterparts who have been working in this arena for nearly a decade. Further, scientists can study diseases on a cellular level and seek treatments and cures using viable stem cell lines opponents to Prop 2 would have "protected" in order to throw in the trash. Again I say, happy day! While not a panacea, stem cell research represents a new medical frontier that is pro-hope, pro-health and pro-living !