

Hillsdale Daily News

March 20, 2008

Stem cell ballot drive effort launches Web site

[BENJAMIN RAY](#), STAFF WRITER

Supporters of stem cell research in Michigan have opened a Web site providing news and stories about the good such research can do.

The site, www.CureMichigan.com, is run by the Stem Cell Research Ballot Question Committee, which is gathering signatures for a ballot proposal in November.

If the necessary 380,126 signatures are gained, voters will decide whether to legally allow embryonic stem cell research to be conducted in the state. The proposal allows for the informed and voluntary donation of embryos produced in fertility clinics that would otherwise be destroyed.

Any research permitted under federal law on human embryos also would be allowed.

The site will provide research news and updates on any movement in Michigan to change laws allowing the research. Signatures must be obtained by July 8; the state Board of Canvassers already has approved the language.

“Our message resonates with voters across Michigan because we all know somebody who could be cured through embryonic stem cell research,” said Mark Burton, ballot campaign director, in a written statement.

Nothing in the ballot proposal would alter Michigan’s laws forbidding cloning. The measure would amend the state constitution to permit the research, as long as the embryos were not suitable for implantation or would otherwise have been discarded. The language forbids selling or buying embryos for research, which must be conducted in accordance with state and local laws as long as those laws don’t prevent or discourage the research.

But those against it, such as Father Tom Butler of St. Anthony Catholic Church in Hillsdale, say it makes no difference of the embryo’s status — a life is a life, in other words.

“We support adult stem cell research, as long as nobody is harmed or killed,” he said. “Science is proving there are perfectly good options for that, and we will be actively for using other available means to do the research.”

Petition gathering centers are open on the west side of the state, in Oakland and Livingston counties and possibly in the Upper Peninsula. The group is based in Lansing.

For more information, contact info@curemichigan.com.

