



Everything Michigan

KALAMAZOO GAZETTE

Public must be educated in stem cell debate

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Michigan's outstanding universities, medical centers and related research facilities make it an excellent place to encourage advances in the health sciences.

Unfortunately, restrictive legislation makes it highly unlikely that the state ever will reap many rewards in one of the most promising areas of medical science -- embryonic stem cell research.

A new group is hoping to educate the public about the importance of this research and what Michigan risks by not participating in it.

Michigan Citizens for Stem Cell Research & Cures (MCSCRC) has launched a Web site -- www.stemcellresearchformichigan.com -- that provides information about stem cell research, frequently asked questions about it, diseases and injuries that might benefit from it and other news related to the field. ...

Rather, MCSCRC hopes to make more people aware of the stem cell research process and the possibilities it holds for finding cures for devastating diseases.

The group also seeks to clarify issues surrounding stem cell research, such as whether adult stem cells -- derived from placentas and from umbilical cords -- are just as effective as embryonic stem cells in research, or that embryonic stem cells are the first step toward the cloning of human beings.

MCSCRC is supported by researchers from both the University of Michigan and Michigan State University, as well as by political leaders from both parties. ...

MCSCRC hopes that through its efforts, the public will become more aware of how Michigan is prohibited from helping to find potential cures and from gaining the economic benefits that go with such scientific advances. ...

Most stem cells are harvested from embryos that have been created for fertility treatment but are not needed by a couple. As we have said before, we believe it makes more sense to use such embryos for medical research rather than discard them, as is usually done now. While opponents of stem cell research

advocate for the ``adoption" of such embryos by other infertile couples, the fact remains that far more embryos are created that there is a demand to adopt.

The MCSCRC Web site offers information about an issue that should be the center of a scientific, not a political, debate.

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