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## Group forms to push embryonic stem cell research

By Kathy Barks Hoffman  
Associated Press

Cathy Coury looks forward to the day when researchers may find a cure for the juvenile diabetes that makes her young sons' lives a constant round of insulin shots and blood-sugar monitoring.

On Monday, she joined researchers from the University of Michigan and Michigan State University, elected officials and policy makers to formally kick off a bipartisan group that plans to make the case that Michigan's tough restriction on embryonic stem cell research is blocking important medical gains and hurting the state's economy.

"I want to know researchers are out there exploring every option," said Coury, who lives in Grand Rapids and is the legislative chairwoman of the West Michigan Juvenile Diabetes Foundation.

The stem cell advocacy group doesn't plan to endorse any lawmakers or any specific legislation. But it hopes to make its case with the public that the state is losing out on potential cures and economic benefits by restricting embryonic stem cell research.

"If we don't use embryos that are going to be discarded anyway ... it pushes the cures further and

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further away," U.S. Sen. Carl Levin, D-Mich., said during a Lansing news conference unveiling the nonprofit group Michigan Citizens for Stem Cell Research and Cures.

Added U.S. Rep. Joe Schwarz, a Republican from Battle Creek: "A state like Michigan ought to be right out there among the leaders in embryonic stem cell research and not have laws that create barriers. ... There is nothing more pro-life than helping the living."

Right to Life of Michigan and the Michigan Catholic Conference are opposed to legislation sponsored by state Rep. Andy Meisner, D-Ferndale, that would allow more embryonic stem cell research in Michigan. They say it would allow human embryos to be destroyed to harvest their stem cells.

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