

## Stem Cell Agency Awards More than \$40 Million in New Research Grants

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La Jolla, CA –Prostate cancer, heart and liver disease, autism, and HIV/AIDS are among the diseases targeted by the state's stem cell agency, the California Institute for Regenerative Medicine (CIRM), in its latest round of funding.

The agency's governing Board the Independent Citizens Oversight Committee (ICOC) approved \$40 million in funding for researchers at 10 institutions including Stanford, UCLA, UC San Diego, Human BioMolecular Research Institute, Cedars-Sinai Medical Center, The Gladstone Institutes, Sanford-Burnham Medical Research Institute, The Salk Institute, Numerate, Inc. and UC Irvine as part of its Early Translational IV Research awards. These awards focus on turning basic discoveries about stem cells into potential therapies.

"These awards are moving discoveries into the clinical pipeline for patients" says Alan Trounson, PhD, President of the stem cell agency. "The strategies are focused on problems where we think there is a very reasonable chance that they will evolve into clinical studies for treating some of the worst diseases we have in the community."

In this "early translation" phase scientists are expected to do research that will result in the development of a new potential drug or cell therapy or make significant strides toward such a therapy. The goal is to identify the most promising projects and move those good ideas out of the lab and into the clinic.

Some examples of the kinds of projects awarded include researchers at UC Irvine who are working on creating sheets of retinal cells – the kind of cells found in the back of the eye that are damaged by both age-related macular degeneration and retinitis pigmentosa – and using these sheets to repair the damage. A team at UCLA is proposing to develop human antibodies that can be used to target prostate cancer cells, and to stop them spreading and growing. Researchers at Cedars-Sinai are using gene-modified stem cells to help speed up healing in segmental bone fractures – injuries that cause great suffering to patients and often involve repeated surgeries and long-term hospitalization. Other awards focus on HIV/AIDS, heart disease, Huntington's disease, ALS (Lou Gehrig's disease), autism, stroke, muscular dystrophy, hemophilia, sickle cell disease, and metabolic disorders.

The Board also approved changes to the stem cell agency's intellectual property regulations that will change revenue sharing provisions to smooth out the payment process for companies that have a successful product. In addition the Board voted to approve a new program designed to increase engagement between the stem cell agency and industry that will provide tens of millions of dollars in research awards to help move the most promising therapies into clinical trials.

"The goal of our work is to do whatever we can to move treatments out of the lab and into patients," says Jonathan Thomas, PhD, JD, Chairman of the agency's governing Board. "This new initiative is designed to help jump start new partnerships with industry and strengthen our ties with the kinds of companies who will ultimately help move these treatments through clinical trials and into patients."

### Early Translations Awards IV

Application	Name	Institution	Budget
TR4-06867	Robert Reiter	University of California, Los Angeles	\$4,075,668
TR4-06845	Jerome Zack	University of California, Los Angeles	\$5,303,375
TR4-06857	John Cashman	Human BioMolecular Research Institute	\$6,361,618
TR4-06713	Dan Gazit	Cedars-Sinai Medical Center	\$5,185,487
TR4-06648	Magdalene J Seiler	University of California, Irvine	\$4,318,439
TR4-06847	John H. Griffin	Numerate, Inc.	\$1,333,795

TR4-06693	Steven Finkbeiner	The J. David Gladstone Institutes	\$2,278,080
TR4-06747	Alysson Renato Muotri	University of California, San Diego	\$1,824,719
TR4-06788	Stuart A Lipton	Sanford-Burnham Medical Research Institute	\$2,124,000
TR4-06711	Michele Calos	Stanford University	\$1,876,253
TR4-06809	Inder M. Verma	The Salk Institute for Biological Studies	\$2,322,440
TR4-06823	Donald B. Kohn	University of California, Los Angeles	\$1,815,308
TR4-06831	Gerald Lipshutz	University of California, Los Angeles	\$1,801,629
			\$40,620,811

**About CIRM:** CIRM was established in November 2004 with the passage of Proposition 71, the California Stem Cell Research and Cures Act. The statewide ballot measure, which provided \$3 billion in funding for stem cell research at California universities and research institutions, was overwhelmingly approved by voters, and called for the establishment of an entity to make grants and provide loans for stem cell research, research facilities, and other vital research.

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