

**From:** Wagers, Amy <[amy\\_wagers@harvard.edu](mailto:amy_wagers@harvard.edu)>

**Date:** Tuesday, October 24, 2023 at 4:19 PM

**To:** Scott Tocher <[stocher@cirm.ca.gov](mailto:stocher@cirm.ca.gov)>

**Subject:** [EXT] Letter of support for Dr. Weissman's CIRM grant

Dear Dr. Tocher,

I am writing to convey my strong support for Dr. Irving Weissman's proposal (TRAN4-15225), which was recently reviewed by CIRM. As a former trainee and colleague in the field, I have followed Dr. Weissman's efforts to advance the use of purified hematopoietic stem cells (HSCs) in clinical transplantation for many years, and I have been compelled by the clear evidence his work provides of the need for such approaches to overcome the risks of cancer cell contamination and graft-versus-host disease that is, unfortunately, all too prevalent when unpurified, bulk CD34+ cell graft are employed. I recently had the opportunity to discuss with Dr. Weissman the comments he received from the CIRM review panel (we were both Keynote speakers at a stem cell conference in San Diego last week), and I was honestly shocked by the panel's apparent lack of appreciation of the profound difference between purified stem cells and the CD34+ cell preparations used by others. These CD34+ cell grafts contain only a minority of HSCs, are frequently contaminated with other, potentially pathogenic, cell types, and cannot and should not be equated with pure stem cells. As this unfortunate misunderstanding seems to have been a major driver of scoring of Dr. Weissman's grant, I urge you to reconsider the panel's recommendation and grant Dr. Weissman's appeal. I am certain that his approach will offer safer, more effective therapies for a broad range of medical conditions, from inherited blood disorders to immune dysfunctions to malignancy, and will be a major win for patients and for CIRM.

Thank you for considering my comments on this matter.

Sincerely,

Amy J. Wagers, PhD

Forst Family Professor and Chair, Department of Stem Cell and Regenerative Biology, Harvard University and Harvard Medical School  
Senior Investigator, Joslin Diabetes Center