



September 22, 2026

Re: In support of Agenda Item #13
(Proposed Supplement to Support Continuation
of EDUC4 [Scholars Program])

Dear ICOC member,

We add our voice to the many you are hearing in enthusiastic support of Dr. Kelly Shepard's proposal for constitutive 5-year renewal of the eighteen extant EDUC4 Scholars Programs throughout the State. This program has been one of the most impactful and cost-effective programs CIRM has sponsored in its over 20-year history. Each of the programs has done a stellar job in realizing CIRM's mission and, importantly, inculcating that commitment in the next generation of scientists. The outcome data support not only how successful alumni have been, but that they have made those contributions in California. Each program has continually made mid-course corrections such that, as presently constituted, we cannot imagine a more impactful cohort of training opportunities. Critically, the programs are in constant communication with each other such that the strengths of one are shared widely among all. Imposing a competitive renewal process at this point would simply be a diversion from our laser focus on training and productivity, and would throw an unnecessary degree of uncertainty into a heretofore seamless process of training translational regenerative medicine biologists immersed in their projects.

We please invite you to view the attached 4-slide summary of Sanford-Burnham Prebys' Scholars Program – also accessible via this link: https://16515-my.sharepoint.com/:p/g/personal/esnyder_sbpdiscovary_org/IQARf5RZZtqhQLSEYXKIdiayAS_E_v5y7wZK9OWUcpOTDu8E?e=eWPdjD – which has a unique emphasis on patient-facing activities and translational projects. However, we know our successes illustrated here are repeated in all of the State's Scholars programs. Continuing these successes seamlessly without disruption, would be, in our view, a most wise, efficient, and cost-effective use of CIRM's funds and resources.

Thanks for your kind consideration.

Regards,

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Evan Y. Snyder, MD, PhD, FAAP, FCNS
(esnyder@sbp.edu)

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Sanford Burnham Prebys Medical Discovery Institute (SBP) EDUC4 Co-Directors



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EDUC 4 at Sanford Burnham Prebys Medical Discovery Institute (SBP)

Funded since 2006

Program Overview

SBP's Scholar's program is a critical "gear" in a seamlessly intermeshing "*La Jolla Mesa Stem Cell Educational Network*" in which the complementary / synergistic strengths & resources of the 3 neighboring CIRM training programs – SBP's (which includes SDSU) (with strengths in stem cell-based disease modeling, transplantation, computational/systems biology, high-throughput technology, drug discovery), UCSD's (with access to a large & diverse clinical population), & Scripps's (with strengths in neuroscience, 'omics, medicinal chemistry, & pharmacotherapeutics) – are pooled to create a broad & deep learning experience for PhD candidates, postdocs, & clinical fellows – all with an emphasis on translation, patient engagement, bioinformatics/AI, & regulatory & clinical readiness. Importantly, we pursue these goals with a focus on broad engagement of trainees from all backgrounds, recognizing science's strength rests on diversity. Similarly, the program strives to ensure that its translational deliverables will be widely accessible & affordable – particularly to under-served & under-resourced communities in California (a value & challenge engrained in our trainees).



Note: This is a video. If it does not play automatically, please click on it with sound turned up



Annual SBP Scholar Retreat which is the hub of the *La Jolla Mesa Educational Network*, created to also embrace CIRM scholars from UCSD & Scripps



EDUC 4 at Sanford Burnham Prebys Medical Discovery Institute (SBP)

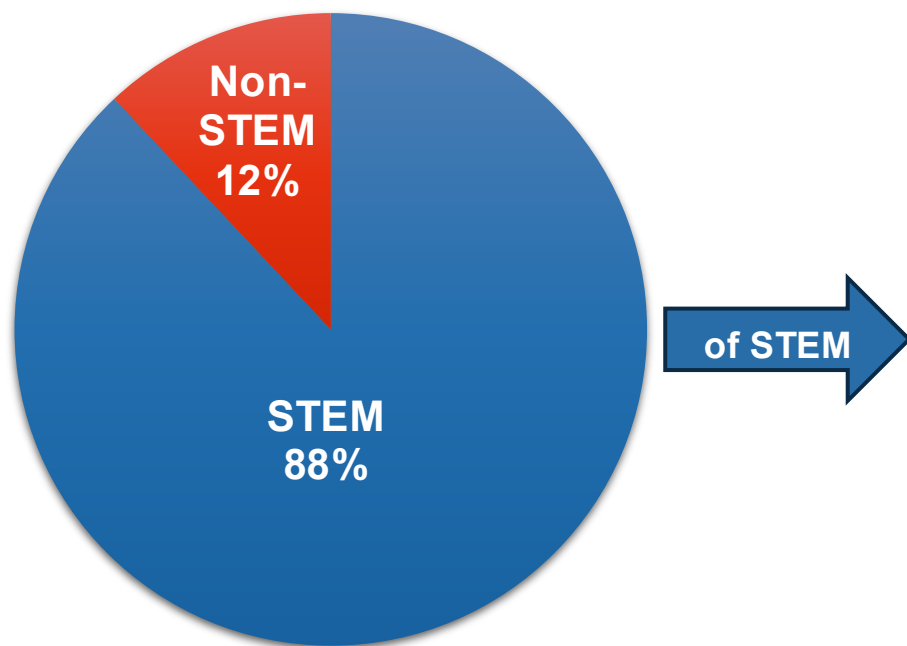
Program Highlights

- A focus on translationally-oriented science & patient-facing activities
 - **Monthly “Bedside-to-Bench Rounds”.**
 - Unique teaching activity in which trainees presented with actual patient case (often in person) (“bedside”) & are taught (Socratically) not only to correlate biology with disease manifestations but are also stimulated to generate novel hypotheses which they learn to test rigorously in informative, well-controlled hypothetical experiments at the “bench”.
 - **Clinical fellows**
 - Help other trainees with clinical correlation; are shadowed in clinic; lead bedside-to-bench rounds
 - **Sanford Children's Health Research Center**
 - Including a focus on rare diseases (**Rare Disease Day Symposium** where trainees interact with patients & families)
 - Mentorship from faculty planning/engaged in **clinical trials** (e.g., preclinical/clinical & regulatory hurdles)
 - **“Meet-the-Patient”/“Meet-the-Scientist” activities** (Opportunity for trainees to improve communication skills with patients)
 - Trainee-initiated, independent, multi-disciplinary, collaborative (>2 trainees as PIs) non-thesis-related **pilot research proposals** which uses ideas generated from “Bedside-to-Bench Rounds” as a springboard for actual bench studies.
- Focus on drug discovery; high-throughput technology; computational biology/AI; cell-based disease modeling
- Unique grad program that employs a “European” model of **individualized tutorial-based training & rapid research immersion** (ideal for clinicians seeking training/involvement in basic science expeditiously)
- Twice-monthly **Seminars of the Sanford Stem Cell Institute** (formerly **SoCal Stem Cell Consortium**)
 - Hybrid sessions (also broadcast by UC-TV & YouTube) that allow attendees to be exposed to the work of cutting-edge scientists world-wide & interact with international thought leaders)
- EDUC4 Scholars assist in mentoring of SBP’s CIRM SPARK, COMPASS, & BRIDGES trainees

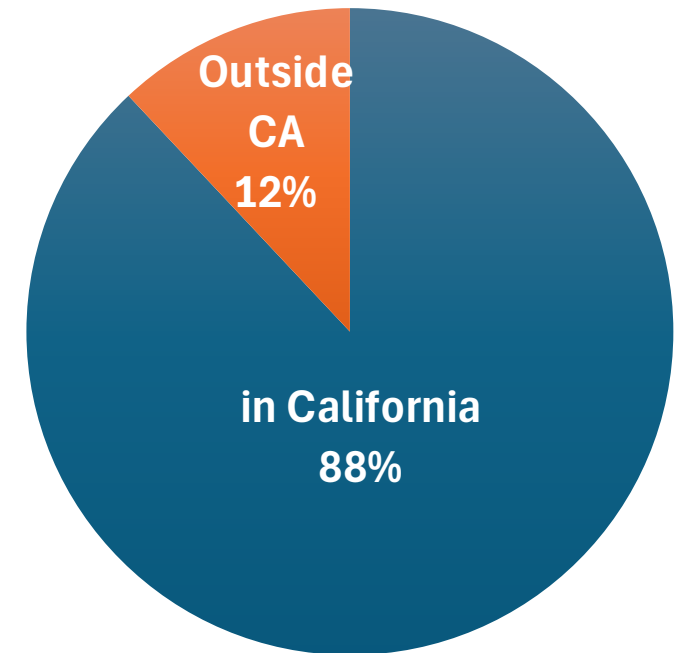
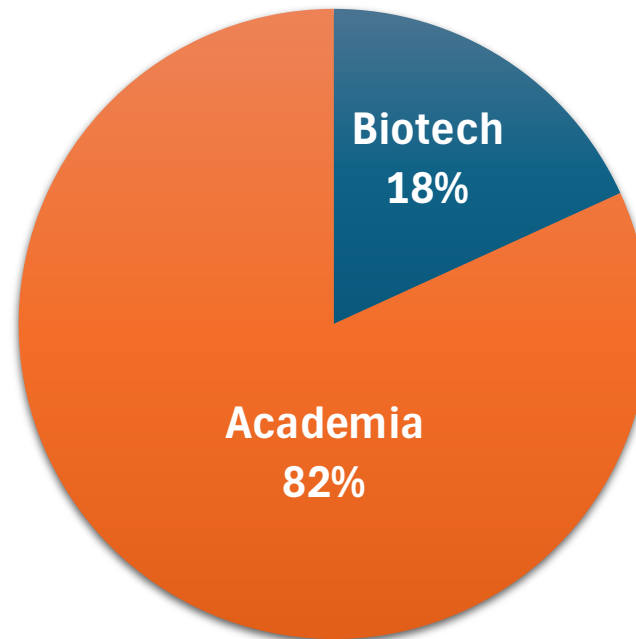
EDUC 4 at Sanford Burnham Prebys Medical Discovery Institute (SBP)

Summary of Outcomes and Impact

The majority of our alumni remain in the STEM field, in California, & in academia performing research that is *translational, clinically-oriented, patient-facing*, reflecting the emphasis of our program. During their tenures (and after – we maintain a vibrant interactive "alumni group"), their work has contributed to 15 grants, totaling ~\$13M in support, & yielding 81 publications.



Alumni Career Paths



Alumni Location

EDUC 4 at Sanford Burnham Prebys Medical Discovery Institute (SBP)

Impactful Trainee Outcomes

Examples:

- **Ilyas Singec, MD, PhD**
Director, NIH Stem Cell Translation Lab (NCATS) → CSO, Fujifilm Cellular Dynamics → CEO own stem cell biotech company in SD (inventor of CEPT, a small molecule cocktail that enhances growth of hPSCs)
- **Alex Colas, PhD**
 - NIH-funded Associate Professor at SBP
 - Well-published in high-profile journals
 - KOL in cardiac reprogramming to address heart failure
- **Matt Tierney, PhD**
 - Postdoc, Elaine Fuchs Lab, Rockefeller U.
 - Science & Engineer Technical Advisor, ARPA-H

Benefits to Institution

Examples:

- **Partnerships** with SDSU & UC-San Marcos, institutions that serve under-represented & under-resourced communities
- Creation of ***La Jolla Mesa Educational Network*** (Scripps, UCSD, Salk, LJI)
 - Shared training, courses, symposia, resources
 - Joint scientific retreats (catalyzes inter-lab & inter-institutional collaborations)
 - **Bedside-to-Bench Rounds** (Mesa-wide)
 - Involvement with UCSD **GMP** facility & Sanford Stem Cell Clinical Center (a CIRM α -clinic)
 - **Clinical fellows** from UCSD
 - Bimonthly Seminars of **Sanford Stem Cell Institute** (formerly SoCal Stem Cell Consortium)(>1.2M views in 26 countries)
- Brought in ~ \$13M **funding**