

CIRM Update (Part I)

In 2004 proponents of Proposition 71, the “California Stem Cell Research and Cures Initiative,” promised that taxpayer money — \$3 billion dollars’ worth — would be spent to conduct research and to construct research facilities that would produce cures. As predicted by Life Legal, there have been no cures. In fact, with all that is developing with alternatives to embryonic stem cell research, California’s Institute for Regenerative Medicine (CIRM) appears to be getting a little desperate. Slowly sinking into irrelevance, CIRM has launched what appears to be a massive public relations and education campaign to create what they identify as a “stem cell science culture.” This is precisely what was predicted by the taxpayer advocacy groups Life Legal represented in litigation challenging the initial authority to fund CIRM.

According to the text of Proposition 71, the governing board of CIRM does not have the authority to appropriate funds for grants or loans in any category other than research and facilities. Nowhere is funding for education or raising public support authorized.

But now, according to information available on its own website, in the past year alone CIRM has approved upwards of \$117 million on grant awards and general funds spending for the stated purpose of educating, raising interest in stem cell research, and guaranteeing that stem cell research remains politically popular for years to come. In CIRM’s own words the goal is to “*[e]ncourage the development of a stem cell science culture’ in California by taking a leadership role in educating and informing the general public, including special interest groups and California students of all ages.*”

In keeping with its mission, LLDF is committed to exposing CIRM for its use of public money when that use includes “educating and informing” the public in order to promulgate the destruction of innocent human life through embryonic stem cell research. On one hand, any funds spent on CIRM’s education campaign deflect the use of these funds from killing embryos. On the other, taxpayer funds are being wasted so that the public is “educated,” thereby ensuring ongoing funding for CIRM’s clone and kill agenda for years to come.

Over the next few weeks you will be receiving a series of messages detailing how CIRM funds are being allocated towards educating you and your children.

“Stem Cell Awareness Day”

Cost: unknown

The second annual “Stem Cell Awareness Day” is set for September 23, 2009. The event is to be celebrated by proclamations, speeches, awareness activities and at least one contest. CIRM employees, including its chief press agent Don Gibbons, are heading up an international stem cell poetry contest at CIRM. While it is not clear how much money CIRM is expending on this, it is expending at least some of the time of its paid employees. Exactly what a poetry contest contributes to conducting scientific research or to constructing research facilities remains unclear.

This type of effort is indicative of CIRM's goal of developing a "stem cell culture" in California. At a recent meeting of CIRM's board of directors, CIRM president Dr. Allen Trounson confirmed CIRM's continuing commitment to developing cultural support for stem cell research and inspiring pride in stem cell achievements. He concluded that public education efforts were very important for CIRM. A staff-provided update on "Stem Cell Awareness Day" at the same meeting indicated that CIRM will be providing scientists to go into the classrooms of at least 50 high schools in conjunction with this event. CIRM staff indicated that they see this day as a way to create what they describe as a "grassroots effort" in support of stem cell research. Just how "grassroots" any effort can be when it is fueled by taxpayer money remains unclear.

Stay Tuned

The next email update on this topic will detail more of the education that CIRM is funding — particularly the education aimed at your teenagers and children in California public schools.
