

CIRM Update (Part II [Sept. 25, 2009])

A stated goal of the California Institute for Regenerative Medicine 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.”¹ As you can see from this quote, CIRM has become committed to educating the public about the desirability of stem cell research, particularly embryonic stem cell research to which most of CIRM’s resources are dedicated.

This email is the second in a series that you will be receiving, the purpose of which is to inform you of how a portion of the billion taxpayer dollars at CIRM’s disposal is being spent to “educate” you and your children.² Keep in mind that according to the text of Proposition 71, the governing board of the California Institute for Regenerative Medicine 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.

The “California Stem Cell Education Initiative Project”

Cost: at least ,000.00

CIRM is funding education efforts aimed at teenagers and children. According to contract records, CIRM allocated ,022 to Laurel Barchas for the “Stem Cell Education Initiative Project.” The contract is to run from February 16, 2009 through September 1, 2009.³ This project appears to consist of an education outreach effort at UC Berkeley, a Facebook Cause, and a Facebook Group (created by Laurel Barchas). The stated goal of the project is to open a dialogue between CIRM and young people. Through the California Stem Cell Education Initiative, undergraduate students, graduate students and post-doctorate level scientists present “unbiased” educational materials to high school students “so they might be inspired to participate more fully in an important aspect of the California economy: stem cell research and biotechnology.”⁴ The group makes no secret of the fact that it receives funding from CIRM.

The related program at U.C. Berkeley, its Stem Cell Education Outreach Program, holds weekly meetings at the U.C. Berkeley Campus with the goal of increasing outreach programs at community colleges and universities throughout California. Their premise is, “Everyone should have a say in the development of new technology like regenerative medicine. This begins with educating people at a younger age about the potential and implications of stem cell research.”⁵ To this end they also lecture at local middle school and high school biology classes on the science and ethics of stem cell research.⁶

Stay Tuned . . .

The next email update on this topic will detail CIRM’s funding of education through an international organization and political lobbying all paid for with your tax dollars.

¹ The Administrative and Operational Goals of the California Institute for Regenerative Medicine, Strategic Plan Draft at [p. 4](#) (emphasis added).

² Unless otherwise indicated, information has been taken from the Governance Subcommittee’s [July 21, 2009 Meeting Agenda Item Summary Chart](#).

³ [CHART for 7.21.09 Gov Sub.072109 Governance Contracts Summary](#) [PDF].

⁴ <http://www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=58048819070&ref=mf>.

⁵ <http://www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=58048819070&ref=mf>; http://apps.facebook.com/causes/12461?as_id=410866&as_type=Sharing.

⁶ http://stsc.berkeley.edu/Projects/STSC_StemCell_Education.htm.

Read this [series on lldf.org](#).

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