

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2010 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE

House Bill 371 (Delegate Nathan-Pulliam, *et al.*)
Health and Government Operations

Stem Cell Research Fund - Sickle Cell Disease - Funding

This bill specifies that, beginning in fiscal 2012, at least 5% of any appropriation made by the Governor to the Stem Cell Research Fund must be designated for research using adult stem cells to treat adults with sickle cell disease.

The bill takes effect July 1, 2010.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: Designating a portion of the funding for stem cell research does not impact overall State funding for the research. Redirected funding will continue to support researchers in the State. Revenues are not affected.

Local Effect: None.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Current Law: Chapter 19 of 2006 created a Maryland Stem Cell Research Fund to promote State-funded stem cell research and cures through grants and loans to public and private entities in Maryland. Annually, beginning in fiscal 2008, the Governor may include in the budget bill an appropriation to the Stem Cell Research Fund. Chapter 19 also established an independent Stem Cell Research Commission under the Maryland Technology Development Corporation (TEDCO). The Stem Cell Research Commission must contract with an independent scientific peer review committee of scientifically

recognized stem cell research experts, which evaluates stem cell research proposals for the commission. Committee members may not reside in the State.

TEDCO and the commission must submit an annual report to the Governor and the General Assembly on the progress of State-funded stem cell research. The report must identify each fund recipient, the amount of money received, and a description of the type of stem cell research performed by the recipient.

Background: The commission is authorized to award three types of grants: investigator research grants, exploratory grants, and post-doctoral research grants. Almost all of the grants have been awarded to The Johns Hopkins University and the University of Maryland, Baltimore, to date.

In fiscal 2009, the Stem Cell Research Fund supported 58 research grants that were approved from 147 applications. The Stem Cell Research Commission is in receipt of 193 letters of intent for fiscal 2010. The Governor's fiscal 2011 proposed budget includes \$12.4 million in general funds to support grants under the Stem Cell Research Fund.

Sickle cell disease is a group of inherited red blood cell disorders that affects an estimated 70,000 to 100,000 Americans. Healthy red blood cells are round, and they move through small blood vessels to carry oxygen to all parts of the body. In sickle cell disease, the red blood cells become hard and sticky and look like a C-shaped farm tool called a "sickle." The sickle cells die early, which causes a constant shortage of red blood cells. Also, when they travel through small blood vessels, they get stuck and clog the blood flow. This can cause pain and other serious problems.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: None.

Cross File: None.

Information Source(s): Department of Business and Economic Development, Department of Budget and Management, Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Department of Legislative Services

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mlm/mwc

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