

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2011 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE

House Bill 870 (Delegate Frank)
Health and Government Operations

Maryland Stem Cell Research Fund - Annual Report and Symposium

This bill requires the Maryland Technology Development Corporation (TEDCO) and the Stem Cell Research Commission to report to the public on the progress of State-funded stem cell research by holding an annual, free-of-charge public symposium at which each recipient of money from the Stem Cell Research Fund must present the results of their research.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: The bill's requirements can be handled with existing resources; however, funding may have to be redirected to do so.

Local Effect: None.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Current Law: Chapter 19 of 2006 created the 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, 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 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.

In fiscal 2010, the Stem Cell Research Fund supported 40 research grants that were approved from 141 applications. The Stem Cell Research Commission is in receipt of 255 letters of intent for fiscal 2011. The Governor's proposed fiscal 2012 budget includes \$12.4 million in general funds to support grants under the Stem Cell Research Fund, approximately the same amount as appropriated in fiscal 2010 and \$2.0 million less than fiscal 2011.

State Fiscal Effect: The Department of Business and Economic Development advises that attendees of last year's Stem Cell Symposium, which was organized by TEDCO, were charged a \$100 fee to defray the costs of running the symposium. Last year's conference cost approximately \$75,000, of which approximately \$30,000 was recouped from admission fees. The conference was also, in part, privately funded. Under this bill's provisions, however, the symposium must be free-of-charge to the public. TEDCO can hold a free symposium with existing resources, although some funds may have to be redirected from research.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: None.

Cross File: SB 731 (Senator Astle, *et al.*) - Finance.

Information Source(s): *Annual Report 2010*, Maryland Stem Cell Commission; Department of Business and Economic Development; Maryland Technology Development Corporation; Department of Legislative Services

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