

## University of Washington Embryonic Stem Cell Research Oversight (ESCRO)

The University of Washington (UW) established the Embryonic Stem Cell Research Oversight Committee (ESCRO) which exists to review and approve research involving human embryonic stem cells. The ESCRO Committee review ensures that both institutional and public concerns regarding sensitive ethical, legal, scientific, and policy issues unique to hESC research are addressed.

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### Federal funding of hESC research

#### Executive Order 13505

- On March 9, 2009, President Obama signed Executive Order 13505.
- This directive lifts the Bush administration's 2001 funding restriction on hESC research and announces that it will be the policy of the Obama administration to "expand NIH support for the exploration of human stem cell research."
- The order states that NIH may support and conduct "responsible, scientifically worthy human stem cell research, including human embryonic stem cell research, to the extent permitted by law."
- The financial effect of this order is to allow the use of federal funds for studying hESC lines that were created since 2001, expanding the breadth and depth of stem cell research.
- The order further directs the Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), through the National Institutes of Health (NIH), to issue new guidance on human stem cell research, based on "other widely recognized guidelines on human stem cell research, including provisions establishing appropriate safeguards."

### NIH Guidelines for Human Stem Cell Research

- The National Institutes of Health (NIH) released Guidelines for Human Stem Cell Research, effective July 7, 2009. The guidelines are available online at <http://stemcells.nih.gov/policy/2009guidelines.html>
- The guidelines are based on the following principles:
  - o Responsible research with human embryonic stem cells has the potential to improve our understanding of human health and illness and discover new ways to prevent and/or treat illness.
  - o Individuals donating embryos for research purposes should do so freely, with voluntary and informed consent.
- Research with human embryonic stem cells is eligible for federal funding if the embryos:
  - o are created using in vitro fertilization techniques for reproduction and are no longer needed for this purpose.
  - o are donated voluntarily with adequate informed consent, including a statement that no payments of any kind are offered for the embryos.
- Research with human embryonic stem cells is NOT eligible for federal funding if the research involves:
  - o introducing human embryonic stem cells into non-human primate blastocysts.
  - o the breeding of animals where embryonic stem cells may contribute to the germ line.

### Oversight of hESC research at UW

#### Embryonic Stem Cell Research Oversight

- In 2007, UW established the Embryonic Stem Cell Research Oversight Committee (ESCRO) to review and approve research involving human embryonic stem cells (hESC).
- The ESCRO Committee review ensures that both institutional and public concerns regarding sensitive ethical, legal, scientific, and policy issues unique to hESC research are addressed.
- More information is available at <http://www.uw.edu/research/main.php?page=escro>
- The ESCRO website describes the following types of research activities:
  - o Research using human embryonic stem cells prohibited at the UW (<http://www.uw.edu/research/main.php?page=escroProhibited>)
  - o Research using human embryonic stem cells allowed at the UW (<http://www.uw.edu/research/main.php?page=escroNewApplications>)
  - o Research exempt from ESCRO review (see <http://www.uw.edu/research/main.php?page=escroExempt>)

### Ongoing research at UW

#### UW Institute for Stem Cell and Regenerative Medicine (ISCRM)

- This premier organization is focused on understanding the biology of stem cells and capitalizing on their unique features to benefit medicine and society.
- Information about specific disease programs being studied by ISCRM researchers can be found at <https://depts.washington.edu/iscrm/research/research.php>
- To learn more about participating in research studies conducted by ISCRM researchers, please review the ISCRM website.
- ISCRM's website is <https://depts.washington.edu/iscrm/>

### Donation of eggs for stem cell research

ISCRM often receives requests from people asking if they can donate eggs for the purpose of creating embryos to be used for research. ISCRM does not accept any egg donations for the purpose of research; it can only accept donated embryos that would have otherwise been discarded by fertility clinics.