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**CALIFORNIA AWARDS FIRST STEM CELL RESEARCH GRANTS; UCLA
SCIENTISTS GARNER SEVEN OF 72 GRANTS AWARDED**

**Researchers from the Institute for Stem Cell Biology and Medicine
at UCLA Awarded More Than \$4 Million in Grants**

UCLA scientists received seven of 72 seed grants awarded today by the state to fund stem cell research, the first money distributed for work on human embryonic stem cells since California voters approved Proposition 71 in November 2004. Seed grant funding totaled \$45 million.

The seven UCLA grants total more than \$4 million over two years. More than half of the applications submitted by UCLA scientists were approved for funding. In all, scientists affiliated with the Institute for Stem Cell Biology and Medicine at UCLA (ISCBM) applied for 11 seed grants.

The California Institute for Regenerative Medicine (CIRM), the state organization overseeing Proposition 71 funding, received 231 applications for seed grants totaling \$138.3 million from scientists at 36 non-profit institutions across the state.

Dr. Owen Witte, a renowned scientist and director of the ISCBM, said he is pleased that so many UCLA scientists secured state funding for their research projects.

“This is a testament to the leading-edge research being proposed by UCLA stem cell scientists, who rank among the very best in their field,” Witte said. “UCLA’s highly collaborative atmosphere allowed our scientists to develop innovative interdisciplinary research projects that bring expertise from all areas of the campus to bear on this important scientific endeavor.”

Funded grants at UCLA include:

Investigators	Grant Title	2 yr/ Approved Budget
Irvin Chen, PhD	Genetic modification of the human genome to resist HIV-1 infection and/or disease progression	\$642,652
Zoran Galic, PhD	Genetic Enhancement of the Immune Response to Melanoma via hESC-derived T cells	\$642, 501
Siavash Kurdistani, PhD	Cellular epigenetic diversity as a blueprint for defining the identity and functional potential of human embryonic stem cells	\$641,047

Michael Teitell, MD, PhD	Role of mitochondria in self-renewal versus differentiation of human embryonic stem cells	\$635,024
Hanna Mikkola, MD, PhD	Improving microenvironments to promote hematopoietic stem cell development from human embryonic stem cells	\$577,037
William Lowry, PhD	Modeling human embryonic development with human embryonic stem cells	\$571,575
Noriyuki Kasahara, PhD	Down-regulation of alloreactive immune responses to hES cell-derived graft tissues	\$469,219
TOTAL		\$4,179,055

“We feel fortunate to have been selected to receive one of seven seed grants awarded to UCLA,” said Teitell, stem cell researcher and an associate professor of pediatrics and pathology and laboratory medicine. “This support will help us determine how stem cells manage their energy resources during self-renewal and differentiation, and may also provide important insight for selecting the highest quality stem cells for future therapeutic development.”

Seed grants are intended to bring new ideas and new investigators into human embryonic stem cell research, CIRM officials said, and offer opportunities for investigators to conduct studies that may yield preliminary data or proof-of-principle results that could then be expanded to full-scale investigations. The grants were reviewed by a committee of scientific experts from outside California and patient advocates from the Independent Citizens Oversight Committee (ICOC), CIRM’s governing board. The ICOC approved the grants Friday during its meeting in the San Francisco Bay area.

The Institute for Stem Cell Biology and Medicine was launched in 2005 with a UCLA commitment of \$20 million over five years. The ISCBM is committed to a multi-disciplinary, integrated collaboration of scientific, academic, and medical disciplines for the purpose of understanding adult and human embryonic stem cells. The institute supports innovation, excellence and the highest ethical standards focused on stem cell research with the intent of facilitating basic scientific inquiry directed towards future clinical applications to treat disease. The institute is a collaboration of the David Geffen School of Medicine, UCLA’s Jonsson Cancer Center, the Henry Samueli School of Engineering and Applied Science and the UCLA College.

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To learn more about the ISCBM, visit <http://www.stemcell.ucla.edu/>.