

NCER Takes Ethical Research Message to North Platte

An overflow crowd of more than 100 people attended the Nebraska Coalition for Ethical Research's June 22 presentation at the Holiday Inn Express in North Platte.

State Senator Tom Hansen and University of Nebraska Regent Bob Phares opened the program with remarks on stem cell research and their involvement with the issue. Senator Hansen was part of the 48-0 vote by the Nebraska Legislature in 2008 to ban human cloning and destruction of human embryos at state facilities. Regent Phares supports NCER's position that supports stem cell

research as long as it doesn't include or promote the destruction of human embryos to do.

NCER is working with Phares and others to block expansion of human embryonic stem cell research at the University of Nebraska.

NCER Executive Director Chip Maxwell led a slide presentation and Q&A discussion. NCER President Dr. Sheryl Pitner, a pediatrician and faculty member at the University of Nebraska Medical Center, was there, as were NCER Deputy Director Justin Naby and Creighton University Geneticist Dr. Charles Brockhouse, a member of

continued on page 2



Sheryl Pitner, MD

Sign Our Petition: No expansion of Embryonic Stem Cell Research in Nebraska

President Barack Obama has changed the federal guidelines for embryonic stem cell research allowing federal funds to be used for research with new embryonic stem cell lines — creating an increased demand for the destruction of human embryos for research purposes.

The University of Nebraska Medical Center pol-

icy will mirror the federal policy — meaning UNMC policy allow an expansion of embryonic stem cell research.

Join the Nebraska Coalition for Ethical Research and our efforts to PREVENT the expansion of embryonic stem cell research at the University of Nebraska Medical Center.

CONTACT YOUR REGENT TODAY:

- **Tim Clare** – District 1 – Lincoln
(402) 475-5100
tclare@nebraska.edu
- **Howard Hawks** – District 2 – Omaha
(402) 938-1604
hhawks@nebraska.edu
- **Chuck Hassebrook** – District 3 – Lyons
(402) 687-2103 ext. 1018
chassebrook@nebraska.edu
- **Bob Whitehouse** – District 4 – Papillion
(402) 339-5515
bwhitehouse@nebraska.edu
- **Jim McClurg, Ph.D.** – District 5 – Lincoln
(402) 477-2030
jmccclurg@nebraska.edu
- **Kent Schroeder, J.D.** – District 6 – Kearney
(308) 237-9688
kschroeder@nebraska.edu
- **Bob Phares** – District 7 – North Platte
(308) 532-3180
bphares@nebraska.edu
- **Randy Ferlic, M.D.** – District 8 – Omaha
(402) 397-2837
rferlic@nebraska.edu



NEBRASKA COALITION
FOR ETHICAL RESEARCH

In This Issue

NCER Board Member
Testifies in South Dakota2

Sen. Johanns Speaks Out2

News Digest3

NIH Guidelines Expand
Embryo Destruction4

SIGN OUR PETITION: *No expansion of Embryonic Stem Cell Research in Nebraska*

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Email _____ Signature _____

Please mail to:
Nebraska Coalition for
Ethical Research
PO Box 540311
Omaha, NE 68154



BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Sheryl Pitner, M.D.

President

Dave Franco, M.D.

Vice President

Brad Kuiper

Treasurer

Jim Beck

Mike Huckabee, MPAS, PA-C

John Kellogg, J.D.

Ken Knaus

Sister Renee Mirkes

Dan Parsons

John Safranek, M.D., Ph.D.

Lou Safranek, M.D., Ph.D.

Greg Schleppebach

Dennis Weisenburger, M.D.

BOARD OF ADVISORS

The Honorable Mike Foley

Nebraska State Auditor

James P. Eckman, Ph.D.

President Grace University

Steve Doran, M.D.

John W. Carlson, Ph.D.

Dept. of Philosophy, Creighton University

J. Peter Ricketts

Platte Institute of Economic Research

The Honorable Mark Quandahl

Former Nebraska State Senator

Denny Hartford

Director, Vital Signs Ministries

Richard Harvey

Chairman, W. H. Harvey Company

Thomas W. Hilgers, M.D.

Pope Paul VI Institute

Joseph Knezetic, Ph.D.

Molecular biologist, Creighton University

Steve Lazoritz, M.D.

Lazoritz Group, Hospital Interaction Specialists

Steve Moltumyr

Pastor, Brookside Church

Angelo Patil, M.D.,

UNMC

Jorge Rodriguez-Sierra, Ph.D.

Professor of Anatomy, UNMC

Bill Sapp

Sapp Brothers Petroleum

Peter Iwen, Ph.D.

UNMC

Charles Brockhouse, Ph.D.

Creighton University

Jack Carlson, Ph.D.

Creighton University

Greg Perry, PhD

Creighton University

Institutional references are for identification purposes only.

STAFF

Jessica Moening

Managing Consultant

Chip Maxwell

Executive Director

Justin Nabity

Deputy Director

NCER Board Member Testifies In South Dakota Legislature



Lou Safranek testifying before the Nebraska Legislature in favor of ethical research.

This past legislative session, there was an effort in the South Dakota Legislature to repeal a state ban on human embryonic stem cell research. NCER Board of Directors member Lou Safranek, an M.D. with a Ph.D. in cell and developmental biology, was asked to testify against the idea of simply declaring open season on human embryos for research.

The legislation was amended to include a restriction sometimes called the Bush compromise: "No human embryonic stem cell research may be conducted unless the stem cell lines used in the research were derived prior to 9:00 p.m. EDT on August 9, 2001, and are listed on the human embryonic stem cell registry established by the National Institutes of Health."

This guideline, eliminated by the Obama administration, was established by President Bush in

North Platte

continued from cover

NCER's Board of Advisors.

The audience was a diverse group of people from various civic and religious organizations in the area. The lively Q&A session demonstrated, once again, that when people get all the facts on stem cell research, they embrace the idea that support and resources should go to research with stem cells from non-embryonic sources, which has produced results and poses no ethical problem.

A local radio station had NCER on to promote the event the morning of June 22, and the local television station covered the event.

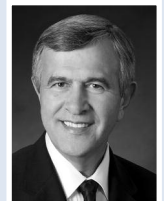
There was extensive coverage in the North Platte Telegraph, including a spirited exchange of letters to the editor that resulted from NCER's visit.

August 2001 to discourage additional destruction of human embryos for research, or at least not fund it with federal taxpayer dollars.

Coincidentally, this is the same action NCER is urging the University of Nebraska Board of Regents to take — make permanent the existing rule that allows human embryonic stem cell research in the NU system only with stem cells from embryos destroyed before August 9, 2001.

Thanks to Senator Johanns For Speaking Out on Human Egg Sales

U.S. Senator Mike Johanns of Nebraska blistered a commission in New York for allowing state tax dollars to be used to pay women to speed up the egg-disseminating process in their bodies and sell their eggs for embryo-destructive stem cell research:



"I am disturbed to hear of this newly-enacted policy in New York, which is wrong on several levels. It not only violates a moral boundary by endorsing the destruction of life for scientific experiments, but exploits women by baiting and bribing them to take a risk when it comes to their reproductive health and safety. Enticing young women with \$10,000 in the name of morally objectionable experiments is nowhere near an appropriate use of taxpayer dollars."

This is a problem that advocates of embryo-destructive basically ignore. Where will all the eggs come from that are necessary to create the embryos to be destroyed to harvest their stem cells? As Senator Johanns noted, the process is not risk-free for the women who participate. Inducing super ovulation can damage the woman. And there's the specter of creating a market in human eggs to produce new human beings for lethal medical experimentation.

Thank you, Senator Johanns, for standing against this movement toward ruthless commoditization of human life.

Setting the Record Straight

Sanford Goodman, spokesman for an organization that supports destruction of human embryos for stem cell research, said in the North Platte Telegraph that those of us who oppose destruction of human embryos for stem cell research are getting our facts wrong when we say that destruction of embryos isn't necessary for stem cell research, and that even researchers who have supported embryo destruction are now moving away from it.

Mr. Goodman cited articles where researchers said positive things about embryonic stem cell research. But actions speak louder than words.

We invite you to read the New York Times article about Shinya Yamanaka, the first to turn a regular body cell into an induced pluripotent stem cell (iPS cell), the equivalent of an embryonic stem cell. Yamanaka told the Times he was motivated by the desire to stop destroying embryos for research.

James Thomson, who replicated Yamanaka's breakthrough, told the Times that the debate over destruction of embryos would soon be "history" because, thanks to the new process pioneered by Yamanaka, there was no need to destroy embryos to get the desired cells.

Visit the website of Thomson's business, Cellular Dynamics International. CDI is going all-out with stem cells produced by this new iPS process that does not involve embryo destruction. The website says that "human skin cells can be reprogrammed into stem cells, which can then be differentiated into any cell type."

Mr. Goodman made fun of Mehmet Oz, a surgeon from Columbia University who appeared on the *Oprah Winfrey Show*. Mr. Goodman said Dr. Oz contradicted "the informed views of the entire biomedical research community." The funny thing is, Dr. Oz was simply agreeing with Thomson that the debate was "dead" because of the new iPS process promoted enthusiastically at Thomson's website.

Don't blindly accept the rhetoric in the stem cell debate, just look at what scientists are actually doing with their careers and financial interests.

The link to the Yamanaka article is <http://www.nytimes.com/2007/12/11/science/11prof.html>.

The link to the Thomson article is <http://www.nytimes.com/2007/11/22/science/22stem.html>.

Find a link to the Oz appearance on Oprah at www.ethicalresearch.net.



*Striving for
Excellence in Medical
Research While
Protecting the Dignity
of Human Beings*

News Digest

Converting Cells Shows Promise for Parkinson's

In a striking instance of biologists' new prowess at manipulating human cells, researchers at the Whitehead Institute in Cambridge, Mass., have converted skin cells from people with Parkinson's disease into the general type of neuron that the disease destroys.

The new approach, though it requires further work, would in principle allow the brain cells that are lost in Parkinson's to be replaced with cells that carried no risk of immune rejection, since they would be the patients' own.

http://www.nytimes.com/2009/03/06/health/06parkinsons.html?_r=1

Regenerative Stem Cells Isolated in Human Umbilical Cord Tissue

Canadian researchers have, for the first time, isolated special stem cells from human umbilical cord tissue and conducted experiments showing they can be used to regenerate tissue.

The findings, published today in the Public Library of Science journal, provide realistic hope that scientists will one day be able to harness those cells to treat specific ailments or diseases, according to John Davies, professor at the Institute of Biomaterials and Biomedical Engineering at the University of Toronto and lead author of the study.

<http://www.theglobeandmail.com/life/health/regenerative-stem-cells-isolated-in-human-umbilical-cord-tissue/article1240425/>

*Here's a roundup of
recent developments in
biomedical research. Find
links to all of these items
at the NCER web site,
www.ethicalresearch.net.*



NEBRASKA COALITION
FOR ETHICAL
RESEARCH, INC.

PO Box 540311

Omaha, NE 68154

402-690-2299

www.ethicalresearch.net

info@ethicalresearch.net

You can make a difference!

Please help us get our message out. Become a Friend of NCER at no charge and receive regular updates. We also would welcome a tax-deductible donation.

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

PHONE () _____ E-MAIL _____

PLEASE CHECK ALL THAT APPLY:

I want to be a Friend of NCER

Please accept my donation of: \$500 \$250 \$100 \$50 \$25 \$ _____

THANK YOU!



NEBRASKA COALITION
FOR ETHICAL RESEARCH

PO Box 540311
Omaha, NE 68154

402-690-2299
www.ethicalresearch.net
info@ethicalresearch.net

NONPROFIT ORG
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
OMAHA NE
PERMIT NO 1951

SEPTEMBER 2009

National Institute for Health Issues Guidelines that Expand Destruction of Human Embryos

The National Institutes of Health issued new guidelines on federal funding of human embryonic stem cell research with stem cells harvested from human embryos deemed “left-overs” at fertility clinics. The guidelines are controversial because harvesting stem cells destroys embryos.

“Allowing researchers to use federal tax dollars on a wider range of embryonic stem cells will drive up demand for embryo destruction,” said Chip Maxwell, Executive Director of the Nebraska Coalition for Ethical Research. “The tax dollars won’t directly fund embryo destruction, but they will prime the pump for additional embryo destruction.”

The new guidelines erased the “Bush compromise.” The Bush administration allowed federal

funding for research with human embryonic stem cells harvested before Aug. 9, 2001. President Bush reasoned that embryos already destroyed could not be saved, but he wanted to discourage additional destruction of embryos for research, or at least not encourage it with federal tax dollars.

The new guidelines abolished the August 2001 cutoff date.

“The tax dollars won’t directly fund embryo destruction, but they will prime the pump for additional embryo destruction.”

– *Chip Maxwell, Executive Director of the Nebraska Coalition for Ethical Research*

Supporters of the new guidelines say the guidelines establish a figurative firewall between fertility therapy and research. The guidelines say that to qualify for federal funding, stem cells must come from embryos that were created solely for reproduction, not for research. But Maxwell sees problems with the policy.

“The guidelines say there must be no connection between embryo production and research,” Maxwell said, “but the guidelines also say there is thorough discussion up front, when people seek fertility treatment, about donation of embryos for research as an option. In fact, the guidelines presume the decision to donate is made up front, though donors reserve the right to change their minds before the donation occurs.”

Maxwell is worried about not just a connection, but an incentive, between production of embryos and destruction of them for research. “We saw the same thing with fetal tissue research – women being told their abortions would have the positive effect of providing tissue for lifesaving research,” Maxwell said. “I refuse to believe there won’t be conversations along the lines of: Don’t worry, make a bunch of embryos; whatever you don’t use, you can donate to lifesaving research.”

As has always been the case, there are no restrictions on private funding of human embryonic stem cell research. The federal guidelines deal only with federal funding.