

**MINUTES OF THE
MARYLAND STEM CELL RESEARCH COMMISSION**
Monday, May 5, 2025
(10960 Grantchester Way, Suite 120, Columbia, MD 21044)

Members:

Mary Armanios
Rachel Brewster, Chair
Margaret Conn Himelfarb
Mamta Gautam-Basak
Diane Hoffmann
Debra Mathews
David Moser
Barbara Nsiah
Linda Powers
Avram Reisner
Ira Schwartz
Curt Van Tassell

Staff:

Ben Antebi, MSCRF
Ruchika Nijhara, MSCRF
Sabrina Spinner, MSCRF

The Commission meeting was called to order at 9:32 a.m.

I. Approval of Meeting Minutes

The Commission reviewed the meeting minutes from the March 3, 2025, Commission meeting. A motion was made and seconded to approve the meeting minutes as submitted. The motion passed unanimously.

III. Statement for Closing the Meeting

A motion was made and seconded that the Commission go into closed session. The motion stated the following:

STATUTORY AUTHORITY TO CLOSE SESSION

General Provisions Article §3-108(a)(5):

A public body may meet in closed session ... to consider the investment of public funds.

General Provisions Article §3-108(a)(13):

A public body may meet in closed session ... to comply with a specific constitutional, statutory, or judicially imposed requirement that prevents public disclosures about a particular proceeding or matter.

TOPICS TO BE DISCUSSED:

The discussion will concern the implementation of the Commission's previously adopted criteria for grant funding. The Commission will discuss which applications to fund, given the scientific rankings and other relevant factors. The discussion will likely also relate to the characteristics of specific applications.

REASONS FOR CLOSING:

Paralleling the NIH process for considering funding of grant applications (as contemplated by its enabling legislation), the Commission believes that confidentiality is essential to protect the sensitive information about plans and processes that applicants divulge, to avoid a chilling effect on future submissions, and to enable the most candid Commission discussion of how best to invest limited resources.

The motion passed unanimously. The Commission went into a closed session at **9:33 a.m.**

In the closed session, the Commission reviewed the scientific peer review ranking of, and key information about, the applications recommended for funding in all of the current categories of grant funding (Manufacturing Assistance, Clinical, Launch, Validation, Discovery, Commercialization, and Post-Doctoral Fellowship Applications). All applicant names and affiliated institutions had been redacted. The Commission focused on applications that received competitive, meritorious scientific scores, giving priority to applications that included collaborations, regenerative medicine, translational research, and underfunded areas of research.

<u>RFA Type</u>	<u>Recommended Awards</u>	<u>Total</u>
Discovery	29 + 2*	\$9,948,617.00
Launch	10	\$3,440,434.00
Clinical	2	\$1,499,145.00
Commercialization	2	\$992,710.00
Manufacturing Assistance	1	\$918,534.00
Post-Doctoral Fellowship	7	\$910,000.00
Validation	1	\$350,000.00
Total	<u>52</u>	<u>\$18,059,440.00</u>

**Additional applications that are recommended if an award is declined. These applicants will not be notified of their "waiting list" status (total amount does not include "waiting list" applications).*

IV. A motion was passed to reopen the meeting at 4:10 pm, which was passed unanimously. The following topics were discussed:

a) **MSCRF Tech Showcase Update:**

Ruchika provided a briefing on the *Stem Cell and Regenerative Medicine Tech Showcase* hosted by MSCRF on April 29th. The event was well-attended, drawing over 100 participants including researchers, company representatives, and other stakeholders from across the state.

b) **New Commissioner Appointment:**

Ruchika announced that a new Commissioner, **Dr. Christopher Dreisbach**, will be joining the Commission next month. Dr. Dreisbach is a bioethicist with a background in religion and has been appointed by the Governor's office.

c) **Farewell to Dr. Debra Mathews:**

The Commission and MSCRF team extended its appreciation and farewell to **Dr. Debra Mathews**, who announced her departure from the Commission. Her contributions were acknowledged and commended.

d) **Discussion on Staffing Needs:**

The need to hire an additional MSCRF team member was discussed. It was determined that a sub-hiring committee would be formed, and this matter will be further reviewed and addressed through that committee.

Meeting adjourned at 4:23 p.m.