

**MINUTES OF THE
MARYLAND STEM CELL RESEARCH COMMISSION**
Monday, May 11, 2026
(10490 Little Patuxent Pkwy, 1st floor Columbia, MD 21044)

Members:

Rachel Brewster, Chair
Margaret Conn Himelfarb
Christopher Dreisbach
Mamta Gautam-Basak
Diane Hoffmann
David Moser
Linda Powers
Alan Regenberg
Avram Reisner
Ira Schwartz
David Valle
Curt Van Tassell

Staff:

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

Office of the Attorney General:

Jigita Patel

The Commission meeting was called to order at 9:15 a.m.

I. Approval of Meeting Minutes

The ten Commissioners reviewed the minutes from the March 2, 2026, Commission meeting. A motion was made and seconded to approve the minutes as submitted. The motion passed with nine votes in favor and one abstention.

II. 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 §3-103(a)(1)(i):

This subtitle does not apply to ... a public body when it is carrying out ... an administrative function.

TOPICS TO BE DISCUSSED:

The discussion will concern a review of operational and related considerations impacting the administration of the MSCRF.

REASONS FOR CLOSING:

The Commission believes that the aforementioned administrative matters do not fall within the scope of coverage of the Open Meetings Act.

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 **9:28 a.m.**

1. Approval of MSCRF Awards: In the closed session, the Commission reviewed the scientific peer review ranking of, and key information about, the applications recommended for funding in six of the seven current categories of grant funding (Clinical, Launch, Validation, Discovery, Commercialization, and Post-Doctoral Fellowship). 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	10	\$3,489,209.00
Launch	9	\$3,149,523.00
Clinical	2	\$2,000,000.00
Commercialization	6 + *1	\$2,597,560.00
Post-Doctoral Fellowship	10	\$1,300,000.00
Validation	2	\$478,533.00
Total	<u>39</u>	<u>\$13,014,825.00</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).*

2. Administrative Matters: The Commission discussed certain administrative matters related to MSCRF's operations.

IV. A motion was passed to reopen the meeting at 3:18 pm, which was passed unanimously. The following topics were discussed:

a) **Budget Update:**

The FY27 budget was approved for \$16.05 million in funding, including a \$550,000 increase from the previous fiscal year. The commissioners discussed legislative efforts that helped secure program funding and acknowledged the importance of maintaining strong relationships with legislative supporters.

- b) **Maryland Stem Cell and Regenerative Technology Showcase:** Dr. Nijhara provided a brief summary of the Tech Showcase hosted by MSCRF in collaboration with the Maryland Department of Commerce and Blackbird Laboratories on April 30, 2026.

Meeting adjourned at 3:59 p.m.