



Submitted online at <http://hescregapp.od.nih.gov/comments/add.htm>

March 10, 2010

### ASH Statement in Support of Revision of the Definition of hESCs

The American Society of Hematology (ASH) appreciates the opportunity to review and provide comments on the proposed correction to the definition of human embryonic stem cells (hESCs) in the “National Institutes of Health (NIH) Guidelines for Human Stem Cell Research” (Guidelines) as proposed in the February 23, 2010 Federal Register (75 FR 8085).

ASH represents over 16,000 clinicians and scientists committed to the study and treatment of blood and blood-related diseases such as leukemia, lymphoma, sickle cell disease, anemia and hemophilia. The Society’s members have been pioneers in the fields of hematopoietic stem cell transplantation (bone marrow, cord blood, and mobilized peripheral blood), gene therapy and hematopoietic and other stem cell research.

ASH applauds the NIH for its efforts to develop and update the guidelines that have the potential to greatly expand the number of hESC lines that are eligible for federal research funding and provide new opportunities for scientific advancement. The proposed correction will clarify that lines derived from embryos up to and including the blastocyst stage are eligible for use in federally funded research, if otherwise eligible. ASH believes this correction is consistent with President Obama’s March 9, 2009 Executive Order on human embryonic stem cell research (E.O. 13505). In addition, the proposed correction is fully consistent with the definition proposed in the draft NIH Guidelines published on April 23, 2009 (74 FR. 18578), as well as within the intent of the NIH Guidelines published on July 7, 2009 (74 FR 32170). Stem cell lines developed from embryos that do not develop to the blastocyst stage offer unique research opportunities, and this correction will ensure that those opportunities are fully explored.

ASH enthusiastically supports the continued development of the field of stem cell research and commends the NIH in taking important steps towards achieving this goal. To this end, ASH strongly urges the NIH to monitor scientific developments in the area of stem cell research and continue to update its Guidelines periodically as this the research progresses.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit these comments. Please contact ASH Scientific Affairs Manager, Ulyana Desiderio, PhD, at (202) 776-0544 or [udesiderio@hematology.org](mailto:udesiderio@hematology.org) for any additional information.

Sincerely,

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