

News Release

For immediate release

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American Diabetes Association: Embryonic Stem Cell Research Offers Great Promise for Americans with Diabetes

ADA urges U.S. House of Representatives to pass reintroduced Stem Cell Research Enhancement Act; H.R. 3 offers best hope to advance search for a diabetes cure

Alexandria, VA (January 10, 2007) – The American Diabetes Association (ADA) – the nation’s leading voluntary health organization supporting diabetes research, information and advocacy – today urged the U.S. House of Representatives to pass the Stem Cell Research Enhancement Act (H.R. 3). The ADA is a strong supporter of the legislation, which would accelerate stem cell research by easing existing restrictions and supporting research that uses embryonic stem cells, while maintaining strict ethical guidelines. Congress passed the legislation last year with bipartisan support, but was unable to overcome President Bush’s veto. A vote on the reintroduced legislation is expected in the House of Representatives on Thursday.

“The most respected scientists across the nation are poised to make significant advances toward a cure and better treatments for diabetes, but are being severely restricted by current standards,” said Darlene Cain, Chair of the American Diabetes Association. “For the nearly 21 million children and adults with diabetes in the United States who are waiting for a cure, this is unacceptable. The American Diabetes Association remains committed to finding a cure for diabetes, and we support the exploration of every ethical avenue of research that will help us achieve that goal.”

Federal regulations that President Bush announced in 2001 have restricted the number of human embryonic stem cell lines available for federally-funded research, and attempted usage of those lines has demonstrated that the number of adequate lines is even smaller due to contamination. Since 2001, scientists have discovered much better methods of deriving stem cell lines so that they do not face the same contamination issues. A significant expansion in the number of available lines is necessary in order to fully reap the medical rewards of stem cell research.

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Diabetes Information

call 1-800-DIABETES (1-800-342-2383)
online www.diabetes.org
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The Mission of the American

Diabetes Association is to prevent and cure diabetes and to improve the lives of all people affected by diabetes.

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Stem cell research allows scientists to better explore how to control and direct stem cells so they can grow into other cells, such as insulin-producing beta cells found in the pancreas. Creating new beta cells could mean a cure for type 1 diabetes as they would serve as a replenishable source of cells for islet cell transplantation. They could also provide a powerful tool for controlling type 2 diabetes.

The American Diabetes Association also urged President Bush to reconsider his position regarding stem cell research and H.R. 3.

“The American people want to see this bill passed,” Cain said. “There is tremendous concern among people with diabetes, and those living with other chronic diseases, that blocking this bill will set back years of progress and devastate the hope of millions. It is the President’s responsibility to listen to those concerns and work with Congress to ensure an outcome which is right for the entire nation.”

Diabetes is one of the nation’s most prevalent, debilitating and costly diseases. Nearly 21 million American children and adults have diabetes, up from 18 million when the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention last measured diabetes prevalence in 2003. If present trends continue, one in three Americans, and one in two minorities, born in 2000 will develop diabetes in their lifetime. The cost of diabetes in the U.S. in 2002 was at least \$132 billion.

The American Diabetes Association is the nation’s leading voluntary health organization supporting diabetes research, information and advocacy. The Association’s advocacy efforts include helping to combat discrimination against people with diabetes; advocating for the increase of federal diabetes research and programs; and improved access to, and quality of, healthcare for people with diabetes. The Association’s mission is to prevent and cure diabetes and to improve the lives of all people affected by diabetes. Founded in 1940, the Association provides service to hundreds of communities across the country. For more information please call the American Diabetes Association at 1-800-DIABETES (1-800-342-2383) or visit www.diabetes.org. Information from both these sources is available in English and Spanish.

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