

# Stem Cell Policy

## National Stem Cell Policy

On March 9, 2009, President Barack Obama issued Executive Order (EO) 13505, entitled [Removing Barriers to Responsible Scientific Research Involving Human Stem Cells](#) (108KB PDF; [get Adobe Reader](#)).

The March 9, 2009 EO changes the way National Institutes of Health (NIH) can support and conduct human stem cell research. The HHS Secretary, through the NIH Director, is required to review existing NIH and other widely-recognized guidelines on human stem cell research and issue new NIH guidance within 120 days of the date of the EO.

### The EO also revokes two items:

- the [presidential statement of August 9, 2001](#).
- [Executive Order 13435](#) (100KB PDF; [get Adobe Reader](#)) of June 20, 2007.

### For More on the Executive Order

- See [President Obama's speech on the White House Web site](#)

## Nebraska Stem Cell Policy

### Nebraska's History on stem cell research

In 2000, the President of the University of Nebraska established a committee to develop guidelines for embryonic stem cell (ESC) research conducted by the University of Nebraska. The resulting recommendations, adopted by the Board of Regents in 2001, required the university to follow federal guidelines, among other things. Therefore, when President Bush restricted the use of federal funds for ESC research to stem cell lines created prior to August 9, 2001, the university was duly limited to using the “Bush” stem cell lines.

The Nebraska Legislature similarly grappled with embryonic stem cell research legislation for many years, but no legislation was enacted until a compromise was reached in 2008. The compromise, the Stem Cell Research Act (LB 606), allows the university to conduct research on human ESC lines as long as the cell lines were developed elsewhere. In other words, the university may not create or destroy embryos.

LB 606 did not alter the Board of Regents' policy requiring UNMC to adhere to federal policy and thus use only federally approved stem cell lines.

### LB 606

One of the major accomplishments of the 2008 session of the Nebraska Legislature was the passage of LB 606, a compromise bill pertaining to the human embryonic stem cell research being done at UNMC as well as the use of somatic cell nuclear transfer (SCNT).

LB 606 will allow UNMC researchers to continue to do research on human embryonic stem cells using federally approved cell lines in university facilities. However, under the provisions of LB 606, no state funds and facilities can be used to destroy an embryo for the purpose of research or to create an embryo through SCNT.

In relation to research involving human embryonic stem cell lines, LB 606 would:

- Allow UNMC to do research with public and private funding on human embryonic stem cell lines as long as the cell lines were developed elsewhere; and
- Allow UNMC to do research with public and private funding on SCNT lines as long as the lines were developed elsewhere.

The bill would not:

- Alter the Board of Regents' policy that allows UNMC scientists to use only federally approved stem-cell lines;
- Affect the Board of Regents' policy that prohibits University of Nebraska scientists from conducting research using stem cell lines produced through SCNT;
- Restrict human embryonic stem cell line creation or research done using private money and private facilities; and
- Restrict SCNT cell line creation or research done using private money and private facilities.

LB 606 encourages scientists to pursue research projects using non-embryonic stem cells rather than embryonic stem cells. Up to \$500,000 in state tobacco settlement funds will be set aside in matching funds each year for non-embryonic stem cell research projects with no single institution in the state eligible to receive more than 70 percent of the funds.

#### **Current status**

On March 6, 2009, the White House announced that President Obama would be issuing an Executive Order changing stem cell research policy. That same day, representatives from the Nebraska Coalition for Ethical Research and others testified before the University of Nebraska Board of Regents that stem cell research in Nebraska should not be expanded beyond the Bush-approved lines and urged the Board to revisit its policy.

On March 9, the president signed an Executive Order reversing limitations on federally funded ESC research to lines created before Aug. 9, 2001. Consequently, unless the Board of Regents changes current policy, the university may begin conducting research on lines created since August 9, 2001, so long as the university doesn't create the lines. The executive order still does not permit the creation or destruction of embryos using federal funds and also calls for the NIH to issue new policy for management of this issue within 120 days.

The Board of Regents could revisit the policy at any time.

- UNMC Stem Cell White Paper -[UNMC Stem Cell White Paper.doc](#)