

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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United States Patent and Trademark Office Upholds Key WARF Stem Cell Patent
Act affirms patentability of an initial University of Wisconsin-Madison
human embryonic stem cell discovery

MADISON, Wis. – The Wisconsin Alumni Research Foundation (WARF) has been notified of the United States Patent and Trademark Office’s decision to uphold the claims of a key stem cell patent held by the non-profit foundation.

Carl Gulbrandsen, managing director of WARF, said, “We’re extremely pleased with this decision. It affirms what WARF has believed all along, that Dr. Thomson’s breakthrough discoveries are patentable inventions.”

The decision affects the patent for primate and human embryonic stem cells known as “913” (U.S. Pat. 7,029,913). The decision to uphold the patent is the first in a review process that began in October 2006, when the patent office agreed to re-examine the patents following challenges brought by the New York-based Public Patent Foundation and the California-based Foundation for Taxpayer and Consumer Rights. This patent follows a different process than the other two patents, known as “780” and “806” (U.S. Pats. 5,843,780 and 6,200,806), which are still pending.

WARF continues to support the distribution of cell lines and methodologies for isolating and culturing human embryonic stem cells to academic researchers through its affiliate, the non-profit WiCell Research Institute, which hosts the National Stem Cell Bank. Since 1999, WiCell has fulfilled 914 licenses for stem cells, which have been shipped to more than 563 researchers in 25 countries and 40 states.

Academic scientists using these cell lines and methodologies face no restrictions on patenting or publishing their own novel work. Currently, two vials containing approximately 6 million stem cells capable of establishing multiple new colonies are priced for academic researchers at \$500.

More information about the patents under re-examination is available at http://www.warf.org/uploads/media/FactSheet_hESc_Patent_Descriptions.pdf.

WARF was established as the world's first university-based technology transfer office in 1925. It supports world-class research at the University of Wisconsin-Madison by funding research, protecting the intellectual property of university faculty, staff and students and by licensing inventions resulting from their work to benefit the world.

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