

# Media Release - Alberta Council of Technologies (28-MAY-09)

## Stem cell research promises to reduce health care costs

### ABCTech hosting events in Calgary and Edmonton

EDMONTON, May 27, 2009/ Troy Media/ -- The Alberta Council of Technologies (ABCTech) will be hosting events in both Calgary and Edmonton in June launching a campaign to demystify stem cell therapeutics (SCT).

The Edmonton event, to be held on June 22 at the Alberta Research Centre, will be hosted by Dr. Martin Ferguson-Pell, Dean of Rehabilitative Medicine at the University of Alberta. The Calgary event, to be held on June 23 at the Alberta Research Centre, will be hosted by Dr. Sam Weiss, Director of the Hotchkiss Brain Institute at the University of Calgary. "Both events," said Dr. Perry Kinkaide, ABCTech president, "are being held to acquaint the public with the extraordinary promise and issues associated with this revolutionary therapy on the future of health care.

"Imagine a future," he added, "when cells taken from you own body may be used to mend a bone, restore hair and skin, or prevent, reverse or even cure a number of diseases such as Parkinson's and Alzheimer's."

Alberta, he said, has a solid foundation of credible researchers with a toe-hold in the commercialization of stem cell therapeutics, including Stem Cell Therapeutics Corp. in Calgary "The province has the means," he said, "to establish itself as a leader in this fast emerging specialty, but cooperation among research and business interests will be essential. Stem cell therapy holds so much promise, especially now that (US President Barack) Obama has promised that research – and that includes stem cell research – will no longer take a backseat to political beliefs, as it did under (former US President George W.) Bush."

Obama's timing, he added, couldn't be better, especially when the economic impact of the degenerative dysfunction of an aging population consumes 80% of health-care budgets in direct costs and causes four times that in indirect costs due to lost productivity.

"The emerging partnership between bio-science, bio-engineering and business, especially in Alberta" he said, "bodes well for the future of this promising new field of medicine, but are we ready for the changes – among the professions, regulatory clearance for allowing quick access for the public to this significantly new treatment technique?"

Keynote addresses by Drs. Weiss and Ferguson-Pell at the events will be followed by a response panel of ethicists, investors, researchers and public policy and rehabilitation specialists, who will discuss the dramatic implications of stem cell therapy on the treating of degenerative diseases associated with ageing, injury and lifestyle. "We anticipate a lively and insightful discussion about some of the far reaching implications of SCT on health care costs and the ethical issues of extending and enhancing the quality of life," Kinkaide said.

Both events are being co-hosted by the Alberta Council of Technologies and the Alberta Health Industry Association and are being sponsored by Pfizer Inc. and the Edmonton and Calgary Associations for Advanced Technology.

For more information:

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