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Detroit to host more than 1,200 scientists at World Stem Cell Summit

By [Tom Henderson](#)

Gov. Jennifer Granholm officially confirmed Thursday afternoon at a press conference at the **Detroit Marriott Renaissance Center** that the sixth annual **World Stem Cell Summit** will be held in Detroit next Oct. 4-6.

The event is expected to bring more than 1,200 researchers, scientists, government officials and representatives from life science companies from more than 30 countries.

The conference will be held at the Marriott and will be sponsored by the **Michigan Economic Development Corp.**, and the three schools in the **University Research Corridor** — **Wayne State University, Michigan State University** and the **University of Michigan**.

News that the summit was likely coming here was first reported in *Crain's* on Sept. 21, just ahead of the fifth annual summit in Baltimore.

"Life science and regenerative medicine are part and parcel of what Michigan wants to add to its economic portfolio," said Granholm. "Therefore, we're extremely pleased to announce that Detroit will host the next World Stem Cell Summit.

"This is great, great news. This is one of the most important scientific conferences in the world," she said. "Stem-cell research is the key that unlocks the door to so many treatments for those who would otherwise have no hope."

"We appreciate the opportunity to showcase what Detroit has to offer," said Mayor Dave Bing. "Detroit has been and always will be the home of the auto industry, but we can't keep living in a one-industry state."

The summit is put on by the **Genetics Policy Institute**, a Florida-based nonprofit. Danny Heumann, the assistant director of TechTown's stem cell commercialization center, a 15,000-square-foot collection of wet labs that is expected to be up and running by the end of June, is a board member of the institute.

"For the years I've known Danny Heumann, he's been pounding me: 'Let's come to Detroit.' I finally took Danny up on it," said Bernie Siegel, the institute's executive director

Siegel said two other important factors in the decision to come here were the passage by Michigan voters of Proposal 2 last November, who approved embryonic stem cell research in the state, and the

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stem cell commercialization center at TechTown.

TechTown recently was awarded \$4.1 million in a combination grant and loan by the **U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development** to fund its build out.

"I've traveled all over the world, and I've never seen such a research model," said Siegel of the center.

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