

## Breaking News

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### **Media Advisory: June 9-11 Stem Cell Advocacy Conference at Stanford; Wisconsin Governor, Top Scientists and Leading Advocates among the Speakers**

**6/6/2006 2:40:00 PM EST**

BIEWIRE

Don Reed has become a fixture at the meetings of the institute responsible for California's funding of stem cell research. Attend one and you'll likely see him scribbling notes or taking the microphone to address the crowd.

Reed isn't a scientist, a government staffer or even a reporter: He is a patient advocate -- the father of a quadriplegic son--and he's spent the past several years feverishly promoting and lobbying for stem cell research in California and beyond.

In an effort to energize people like Reed and to encourage involvement among others in the national stem cell debate, the Genetics Policy Institute, a Florida-based nonprofit organization dedicated to advancing stem cell research, and the Stanford University School of Medicine are holding a three-day conference on stem cell science and policy.

The conference, "Stem cell policy and advocacy summit: Empowering the pro-cures coalition," is being sponsored by the Stanford Center of Biomedical Ethics. It will run June 9-11 at the Frances C. Arrillaga Alumni Center on the Stanford campus.

"This summit provides an opportunity for leaders of grassroots organizations, researchers, students, biotech leaders and key decision-makers to interact and discuss the future strategies to advance this potentially lifesaving research," said Bernard Siegel, the Genetic Policy Institute's executive director. "As stakeholder groups become aware of the promise of stem cell research, increasing demands are being made to remove the political and legal roadblocks delaying potential cures."

The stem cell gathering will feature presentations by Wisconsin Gov. Jim Doyle (see separate Q&A); Nobel laureate Paul Berg, PhD, the Robert W. and Vivian K. Cahill Professor of Cancer Research, Emeritus, at Stanford; Bob Klein, chair of the California Institute for Regenerative Medicine; Evan Snyder, MD, PhD, director of the Burnham Institute's stem cell program; and James Reston Jr., author of *Galileo and Fragile Innocence*.

Representatives from the Christopher Reeve Foundation, Parkinson's Action Network and Hadassah, as well as Reed and other leaders of the activist community will also give presentations. "I'll discuss how everyday people with no training can make a difference in matters that affect everyone's lives," said Reed, who in 2000 helped write and pass legislation that provided more funding for spinal cord injury research in California.

"Some of the most interesting parts of the event will be talks on policy and advocacy: how to get bills passed by state legislatures, how to build grassroots organizations," said Christopher Scott, executive director of Stanford's Program on Stem Cells and Society and the conference co-chair. "It's a real training opportunity for out-of-state policy-makers and advocates who want to push an agenda similar to California's."

This is the second annual event for GPI, and Siegel said this year's location is a meaningful one. With the passage of Proposition 71, which authorized California's providing \$3 billion for stem cell research, "California has become the center of the world for regenerative medicine," he said. "Stanford is accomplishing some of the most sophisticated stem cell research on the planet, and the Stanford Center for Biomedical Ethics has become the 'thought-leader' in studying the impact of regenerative

medicine on modern society."

For more information and to register for the conference, please visit <http://www.pro-cures.com/>. The registration fee is \$495 per attendee; full-time Stanford students and faculty can attend for free, and discounted rates are available for others.

The Coalition for Advancement of Medical Research, the Alliance for Stem Cell Research and the Student Society for Stem Cell Research are also sponsoring this event.

Stanford University Medical Center integrates research, medical education and patient care at its three institutions -- Stanford University School of Medicine, Stanford Hospital & Clinics and Lucile Packard Children's Hospital at Stanford. For more information, please visit the Web site of the medical center's Office of Communication & Public Affairs at <http://mednews.stanford.edu>.

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