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Governor Granholm Says Michigan Must Lift Restrictions on Stem Cell Research

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LANSING - Governor Jennifer M. Granholm today restated her call for state lawmakers to ease the restrictions on embryonic stem cell research in Michigan. The governor's comments came during a Dearborn town hall on the Promise of Stem Cell Research sponsored by the nationally-recognized Genetic Policy Institute and Michigan Citizens for Stem Cell Research and Cures (MCSCRC).

"The promise of stem cell research is allowing talented researchers and businesses around the world to develop cures for devastating diseases," Granholm said. "By lifting the decades-old restrictions on stem cell research, the cures that could have tremendous impact on the lives of Michigan citizens who live with these illnesses could be developed right here in our own backyard."

Granholm noted that embryonic stem cell research would be limited to those embryos that would otherwise be discarded by fertility clinics that are already legally operating in the state.

Granholm has been a consistent advocate of expanded stem cell research and called for the easing of Michigan's restrictions in her 2006 State of the State address. In her speech, Granholm called on the Legislature to pass House Bill 4900 sponsored by Representative Andy Meisner (D-Ferndale). Similar legislation has been introduced in the State Senate by Senator Gretchen Whitmer (D-East Lansing). Both bills add tougher penalties for human cloning.

In July, the governor announced an online petition drive to ask the state Legislature to ease stem cell research restrictions in Michigan. Among the thousands of people who have signed the petition are Muhammad Ali and his wife, Lonnie. Ali has been a champion for Parkinson's disease and stem cell research since being diagnosed with Parkinson's in 1982.

"Medical leaders, doctors, and scientists continue to work hard to discover cures using complex techniques to find the cause of the disease rather than just treat the symptoms, and stem cell research has the ability to do just that," Ali said. "We are joining Governor Granholm in encouraging all Michigan citizens to unite in the fight to ease the restrictions on stem cell research in Michigan."

Congress has acted on the Stem Cell Research Enhancement Act. Despite overwhelming bipartisan support for the legislation in both the Senate and House, the president vetoed the legislation in July.

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