

Patient Advocates, Stem Cell Leaders Urge United Nations to Reject Ban on Therapeutic Cloning in Open Letter to Kofi Annan

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To: National Desk

Contact: Sue Zoldak of GCSA, 202-293-5870 or 202-306-3012 (cell), Julie Kimbrough of Coalition for the Advancement of Medical Research, 212-585-3501 or 646-734-6091 (cell), Web: <http://www.camradvocacy.org>

UNITED NATIONS, Oct. 13 /U.S. Newswire/ -- The Coalition for the Advancement of Medical Research (CAMR) presented an open letter signed by 125 domestic and international patient groups, scientific societies and academic institutions to Secretary- General Kofi Annan (news - web sites) and the General Assembly urging UN decision- makers to reject a vote banning somatic cell nuclear transfer (SCNT), commonly called therapeutic stem cell research. At a briefing attended by mission delegates, Daniel Perry, President of CAMR said, "This letter sends a clear message to all United Nation delegates and policy leaders around the world that any ban on therapeutic cloning research will be strongly opposed. Therapeutic cloning could lead to new treatments and cures for millions worldwide facing incurable diseases and conditions such as cancer, Parkinson's disease (news - web sites), Alzheimer's, diabetes, ALS and spinal cord injury. SCNT is not reproductive cloning or creating babies which we all agree is unethical; it is about improving lives."

CAMR joined forces with the Genetics Policy Institute and the Republic of Korean UN Mission to gather a group of patient advocates. Today's patient-advocate briefing precedes the start of final UN deliberations on a proposed worldwide treaty sponsored by Costa Rica banning therapeutic cloning research. In the letter, Bill Richardson, Governor of New Mexico and former U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations (news - web sites) said, "The resolutions to be discussed by the General Assembly could affect the health and well being of hundreds of millions of people facing intractable diseases in every nation in the world. The United Nations should consider carefully before it attempts to ban a scientific technology that holds infinite promise for the development of treatments for serious illnesses and devastating disabilities."

Bernard Siegel, executive director of GPI added, "The proposed UN treaty must be stopped. We should not prohibit scientists from exploring new and important research; we should not discourage funding for ethical research and we must not diminish the hope of millions suffering from diseases and other life threatening conditions. GPI along with leading scientists from around the world oppose this treaty and are urging policy leaders to learn about therapeutic cloning before enacting ill-advised bans."

CAMR and GPI concluded the briefing with a special 3-minute message from Christopher Reeve to the United Nations on this issue. You may view the video message at the GPI Web site at <http://www.Genpol.org> .

The Coalition for the Advancement of Medical Research (CAMR), is a non-partisan non-profit comprised of nationally-recognized patient organizations, universities, scientific societies, foundations, and individuals with life-threatening illnesses and disorders, advocating for the advancement of breakthrough research and technologies in regenerative medicine – including stem cell research and somatic cell nuclear transfer – in order to cure disease and alleviate suffering. For more information on CAMR, visit the Web site: <http://www.camradvocacy.org>

The Genetics Policy Institute (GPI) is the leading international nonprofit organization dedicated to establishing a legal framework to advance scientific research for future cures and is a leading defender of stem cell research worldwide. Please visit GPI online at <http://www.genpol.org>

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