

****EMBARGOED UNTIL JUNE 8 AT 9 a.m. CDT USA****



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Meagan Comerford, ISSCR
+1-847-509-1944 x246, mcomerford@isscr.org

Dan Sweet, Fleishman-Hillard
+1-202-828-9724, Dan.Sweet@fleishman.com

Jon Berke, Fleishman-Hillard
+1-202-659-5895, jon.berke@fleishman.com

ISSCR Launches Web Site Providing Information on Stem Cell Treatments

Deerfield, IL, June 8, 2010 – The International Society for Stem Cell Research (ISSCR) announced today that it has launched “A Closer Look at Stem Cell Treatments” (www.closerlookatstemcells.org), a Web site to arm patients, their families and doctors with information they need to make decisions about stem cell treatments. The Web site was developed in response to the growing number of aggressive marketing campaigns on the Internet and elsewhere offering stem cell treatments. The ISSCR urges individuals to be cautious and to learn the facts before making any decision.

“Stem cells do hold tremendous promise for the treatment of many serious diseases. Yet there are organizations out there that are preying on patients’ hopes, offering stem cell treatments – often for large sums of money – for conditions where the current science simply does not support its benefit or safety,” said Irving Weissman, MD, President of the ISSCR. “We want to stress through this initiative that there are internationally accepted medical criteria for getting new medicines into clinics. Patients have a right to know if the clinic or treatment they are considering adheres to these criteria. We feel it is an obligation of the ISSCR to both a) alert patients and caregivers about clinics and other entities that are selling unproven ‘stem cell’ therapies, and b) help shepherd real stem cell advances from discovery to successful patient treatments as rapidly as possible. ”

Currently there are only a small number of stem cell treatments that have been shown to be beneficial in rigorous studies. These mostly pertain to diseases or conditions of the blood as well as skin grafts and

-continued-

****EMBARGOED UNTIL JUNE 8 AT 9 a.m. CDT USA****

corneal repair. The ISSCR is concerned that stem cell treatments are being marketed to patients worldwide for a variety of medical conditions, without having the mechanisms in place to ensure safety or likely benefit. Without these safeguards, patients may be put at risk.

The Web site offers several tools for patients to evaluate a prospective clinic or treatment including a list of questions to ask about the treatment and providers as well as resources that explain fundamental scientific principles of stem cell biology and the implications for stem cell treatments. Ultimately, the Web site will list stem cell clinics and whether they do or do not provide the ISSCR with information showing that appropriate oversight and other patient protections are in place.

Visitors to www.closerlookatstemcells.org can submit, for review, a clinic or treatment they have seen advertised. The treatment providers will be asked to present evidence that a) a medical ethics committee is involved to patients' rights; and b) there is supervision by an official regulatory body such as the European Medicines Agency (EMA) or the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) for the trial or approved use of a treatment for specific diseases or conditions.

"We want patients to feel they have access to critical information they might otherwise not have, so they can make the best decision for their individual situation," said Patrick Taylor, JD, Chair of the ISSCR Task Force on Unproven Stem Cell Treatments. "The key to ensuring that treatments are safe and effective is a well-established path from basic research to clinical care, through carefully constructed studies and independent review. The criteria selected by the task force are simple to apply, but of extraordinary power in promoting progress while protecting patients."

The International Society for Stem Cell Research (ISSCR) is an independent, nonprofit organization established to promote and foster the exchange and dissemination of information and ideas relating to stem cells, to encourage the general field of research involving stem cells and to promote professional and public education in all areas of stem cell research and application.

###