

# University of Connecticut

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## Stem Cell Institute

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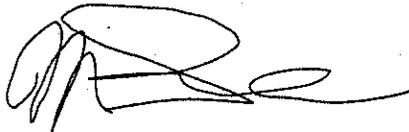
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Distinguished members of the committee, the establishment of UConn Health Network will also allow the UConn School of Medicine to achieve the Research and Scholarship goals of its Academic Plan. The UConn Health Network's scientists and physicians will focus on and accelerate the process of bringing discoveries from laboratory bench to bedside and from the bedside to the general population, thus bringing patients effective new treatments. A strong partnership with they partner with the clinicians and clinical scientists at Hartford Hospital, St-Francis Hospital, Connecticut Children's Hospital and the other members of the UConn Health Network is essential for the School of Medicine to succeed in the strategic cutting-edge research areas of Stem Cell Biology/Regenerative Medicine and Engineering, Nanomedicine, Musculoskeletal Science, Cardiovascular Research, Genomic/Proteomic Medicine, Neuroscience and Behavioral Science, Structural Biology, Immunology and Inflammation, as well as Cancer and Aging.

Improving the School of Medicine's national and international prominence depends heavily on the UConn Health Network to sustain and expand our interdisciplinary approach and clinical and translational research. In an era dominated by large interdisciplinary groups to bring discoveries from the bench to the bedside, a network of clinicians and scientists is essential to create a multidisciplinary mosaic to support clinical and translational research. The UConn Health Network will be the flagship to re-engineer the Clinical Research enterprise and to ultimately enable researchers to provide new treatments more efficiently and quickly to patients. The UConn Health Network will assemble interdisciplinary teams of physicians, geneticists, engineers, chemists, biologists, physicists, bioinformatics specialists, computational scientists, clinicians and stem cell scientists to understand basic biological processes, analyze data from the Human Genome Project and apply this knowledge to human disease in order to discover new therapies and treatment modalities. In so doing, the Network will train the next generation of biomedical scientists and clinical researchers and expand education and training opportunities in underserved states and communities.

The UConn Health Network is crucially important to moving the basic research discoveries of our stem cell scientists from the laboratory bench to the cure of human diseases and the repair of damaged tissue. An embryonic stem cell is an undifferentiated cell that is obtained from an embryo by specialized microsurgery techniques. Embryonic stems have two important properties: 1) the potential to become any cell type (e.g. muscles or brain cells, or blood cells) present in the body and 2) the capacity for limitless multiplication and division in a test tube. A stem cell line is a specially created population of undifferentiated cells, and four such cell lines (CT1 to CT4) have been created at the University of Connecticut Human Embryonic Stem Cell Core facility. Human embryonic stem cell lines offer the best hope for many disease therapies. In this regard, the first USDA-approved clinical trials using embryonic stem cells have been initiated for patients suffering from spinal cord injuries and from macular degeneration (a common cause of blindness). If UConn scientists are to become leaders in the therapeutic uses of stem cells, it is essential that they partner with the clinicians and clinical scientists at Hartford Hospital, St-Francis Hospital, Connecticut Children's Hospital and the other members of the UConn Health Network.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of several loops and a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.