Program Report Card: University of Connecticut Stem Cell Institute (UCSCI)

Quality of Life Result: All Connecticut residents live free of disease and of the lingering effects of bodily injury.

Contribution to Result: Building on its existing research strengths, UCSCI (stem cell program) contributes to this end result because it seeks to develop medicine and therapies to cure and eradicate disease and repair injured tissues.

Partners: State of Connecticut, Department of Public Health, Connecticut Innovations, NIH, Wesleyan University, Yale University

Performance Measure 1: The amount of awards received by the Health Center and Storrs.

Performance Measure 2: Total Full Time Equivalents funded on Stem Cell Grants.

Performance Measure 3: Stem Cell Lines Created and Publications.

Story behind the baseline: There are thirty-two laboratories supported by this initiative with a wide range of research projects. There are currently forty-five publications. A major component of Stem Cell research will be housed, in a new $52 million, Cell and Genome Sciences building at the Uconn Health Center in Farmington, equipped with the latest technologies for studying stem cells and their genomes. This site will bring together scientists working in stem cells into a cross-disciplinary and collaborative setting. The Cell and Genome Sciences Building will consolidate equipment and staffing resources to coordinate research within and outside the University. Companies which have signed on with Uconn are DRG (Doctors Research Group) - working to utilize stem cells in bone cement products and Cytotooth - current product offering is storage and growth of stem cells extracted from tooth pulp for future therapeutics uses, but came to UConn specifically to begin pursing research in areas associated with degenerative diseases.

Proposed actions to turn the curve:
Increase Federal funding now that Pres. Obama removed the restrictions set by Pres. Bush on federal funding for research on human embryonic stem cell lines derived after Aug. 2001. However, all the lines must be first registered at the NIH if the informed consent form for the embryo donation to derive the lines ethically meets requirements set by the NIH.

Proposed actions to turn the curve:
Maintain or increase number of employees funded by Stem Cell Research funds which in turn will save jobs in the state of Connecticut or create more jobs.

Proposed actions to turn the curve:
Currently most stem cell lines have been derived and cultured in contact with animal products. We need to derive new stem cell lines under animal-free conditions, so they are biologically safe when used to treat patients. This is a goal of the stem cell core to create these lines.