

STEM CELL RESEARCH
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Society today stands on the threshold of a new era in biomedical research. Scientists revealed the existence and role of DNA and cellular science many years ago. Currently, scientists are not only able to describe the nature of cellular life, but manipulate it as well. These developments have the potential to relieve enormous human suffering for over 100 million Americans by providing treatment for Multiple Sclerosis, Alzheimer's, Juvenile Diabetes, Cancer, Parkinson's, and other debilitating diseases.

Jewish tradition and law impose upon us the obligation to save and heal human lives as an integral part of valuing human life. Furthermore, our tradition does not accord an embryo *in vitro* the full status of human-hood and all the protections that human beings enjoy. Thus, if embryonic stem cell research promises to advance our ability to heal human beings with greater success, and this can be accomplished without the destruction of human life, such research should be pursued.

Therefore,

–The Jewish Community Relations Council of Greater Washington supports research using both adult and embryonic stem cells and research using somatic cell nuclear transfer (SCNT) technology for therapeutic purposes,

–We support government funding of such research,

–We support actions undertaken by the legislative or executive branches of government to implement these objectives, including legislation that encourages the development of new stem cell lines. We believe that such research should be limited to surplus embryos from *in vitro* fertilization with the informed consent of the donors. We also believe that such research should be limited to embryos of very early embryonic development,

–We believe that such research should be carefully monitored by a nonpartisan oversight body composed of scientists and ethicists, which should be funded and empowered by the government to carry out its oversight effectively, and we support the efforts of the scientific community to develop standards and monitoring mechanisms for the use of SCNT technology.

*This policy draws from the related policies developed by the Jewish Council for Public Affairs and the Orthodox Union.