

March 25, 2010

Re: FR Doc. 2010–3527

Dear Dr. Collins:

The Endocrine Society appreciates the opportunity to comment on the proposed revision of the definition of human embryonic stem cells in the National Institutes of Health (NIH) Guidelines for Human Stem Cell Research. The Endocrine Society is the world's oldest, largest, and most active organization devoted to research on hormones and the clinical practice of endocrinology. Today, The Endocrine Society's membership consists of more than 14,000 scientists, physicians, educators, nurses and students in more than 100 countries. Society members represent all basic, applied and clinical interests in endocrinology.

The Endocrine Society supports the NIH's proposal to revise its definition of hESCs. The initial language restricted federal funding to cells derived from the inner cell mass of blastocyst stage embryos, imposing an unintended restriction on certain populations of hESCs and potentially limiting research progress in this important area. We agree that the proposed new definition captures the true spirit and meaning of the original definition, and clarifies a potentially confusing point. As well, it does not change the important and very rigorous ethical standards set forth in the guidelines.

The Endocrine Society supports the NIH's clarification of this language and the agency's ongoing commitment to the ethical conduct of research using hESCs.

Sincerely,



Kelly Mayo, PhD  
President-elect, The Endocrine Society